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[HINDON GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO SPANISH JOE.]

THE KEEPER OF THE FERRY.

By the Author of "The Bondage of Brandon."

CHAPTER VII.

A WICKED RESOLVE.

Prior.—Wretch, if they fear no spectred inmate shapes—
Joe.—Chase, trifter. Would you have me feel remorse?
Leave me alone—nor call, nor chain, nor dungeon
Speaks to the murderer with the voice of solitude.

Prior.—Thou sayest true—
In cruelty of mercy will I leave thee. *Moluris.*
Reluctant now, as night came on,
His lonely couch he pressed,
And wearied out, he sank to sleep—
To sleep—but not to rest. *Southey.*

Before Sir Thomas Breckenridge Wicherley left the ferry-house, he was satisfied that the boy whom he had been questioning was no other than the rightful heir to the title and estates, the possession of which he travelled from London to usurp. It seemed almost absurd to think that a little fair-haired boy should have escaped the perils of the wreck and the angry waves, and should now be living upon the confines of his own property—some day to emerge from a temporary obscurity, to hurl the usurper from his giddy eminence, and take possession of his own.

Yet it was so.
Sir Thomas was not naturally a bad-hearted or a badly-disposed man; but he felt a strange, unwonted sensation rising to his brain as he looked upon the flaxen-haired youth who had sprung up by magic, as it were, to cast him headlong to the abyss of despair, and that, too, after he had been congratulating himself upon inheriting a property he had always looked upon as his own, and by means of which he had hoped to pass an old age of dignity and ease.

As he looked at Arthur, the air seemed to change its colour and assume a sanguinary hue. It was only a fanciful creation of a disordered mind, but it was ominous of events to ensue shortly. Neither Sir Thomas or Hindon allowed the ferryman and his

family to guess the nature of the alarming discovery they had made.

When the question was set at rest in the minds of the travellers, they thanked the Goodalls for their hospitality; and having inquired the way, set off by a bridle path for Baskerdale.

For half-a-mile or more they proceeded in silence. Sir Thomas was the first to speak.

"No doubt about it, eh, Hindon?" he exclaimed. "The story is all probable enough. The Golden Nugget was wrecked on this coast. The ferryman says he went to render what assistance he could, and that he picked up a man and a boy. The man must have been Sir William, and the boy his son. They said something about having a casket or a box containing papers, didn't they? The brat's identity will be discovered, as sure as fate, in the course of time, Hindon, and then we are as good as ruined. I know possession is nine points of the law; but who can stand against indefeasible right? I'll tell you what it is, my good fellow, we had better pack up our traps and go back to London again. What will be the use of taking possession of the property, and living on it long enough to make one's self comfortable and like it, and all that; and, after all, to be ejected—turned out like a rogue and a vagabond, and laughed at by everybody? Oh! by Jove! that will not do for me. I must go back to town, and tell Sockton Sark all about this most extraordinary and mysterious affair."

Hindon kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, as if his mind was abstracted and the words of his companion were lost upon him, or as if the little quivering blades of verdant grass interested him beyond measure and he contemplated turning herbalist as a primary and direct result of his visit to the country.

"Why don't you say something, Hindon?" cried Sir Thomas, petulantly. "You see I am at my wits' end, and you know very well how I hate talking. Say something, if it is only to tell me I am a ruined man, and can't help myself. If I see a lame dog, I always give him a lift over the stile; but fellows like you have no Christian charity about them, not a bit. If a man can't swim, he may sink, for what help, comfort, or consolation can you give him?"

Hindon took no notice whatever of his master's tirade; he contented himself with saying:

"I was thinking. If you won't do the thinking necessary to the success of our plans, it follows as a natural consequence, that I must; and the result of my deliberations is simply that the boy must be removed. Let him be taken away to some part of the country where he will not be dangerous."

"Taken away!" repeated Sir Thomas; "we must have no foul play. I—I couldn't reconcile it to my conscience; I couldn't, indeed. Goodness knows I sleep badly enough at night now. I used to be able to eat salmon and cucumber for supper, and sleep over it without dreaming, but I can't do it now—I can't, indeed; and if I thought that anything either was going to happen to that lad through my instrumentality, or had happened to him, I don't believe I should get above half-a-dozen winks of sleep from ten till ten. No violence, Hindon."

"Who was talking about violence?" replied Hindon, who appeared to have caught some of the irritation formerly displayed by his master. "I was only remarking that if we are to enjoy this property with a tolerable title, we must look to the boy. To allow him to remain where he is would be nothing more or less than madness, for a discovery of facts hostile to us must sooner or later take place. For that reason, I say, let him be removed and carefully provided for. I don't want to hurt the boy; I wouldn't touch a hair of his head; but we cannot submit tamely to be ousted from the property at the very moment of coming in to it. Had we enjoyed it some years, and got something out of it, it would be a different thing."

"What a practical fellow you are in money matters; you are always for getting something out of everything you touch. Why, Hindon, you ought to be a rich man," said Sir Thomas.

"I am not a pauper," returned the man, with a complacent smile; "but my wealth or my poverty is not the question. Which would you rather do, go back to London and live your old hopeless life, or settle down at Baskerdale, be a country gentleman, marry some pretty heiress, and let your children inherit the land?"



"Pon my word, Hindon, you are a wonderful fellow. You paint the picture in very tempting colours; you do, indeed," said Sir Thomas, allowing himself to be led away by the prospect. "I shall be a baronet, with a large property, eh? Able to make any nice girl 'my lady?' It's very tempting. Quite alluring. No duns. No people coming bothering for money. Plenty of riding and shooting. The best of everything. It's very seductive. It is, indeed. I think I shall leave the matter to you, Hindon. Just get the brat out of the way quietly, but don't hurt him. Mind that, Hindon; don't hurt him. You are a clever fellow; you must manage it. I think we will elect to stay where we are. I won't go to Sockton Sark, and cut my own throat by telling him of the brat's existence, as I thought of doing at first. Second thoughts are best, Hindon, eh? My poor father always told me to distrust impulses, because to act on impulse would be to do what women are constantly in the habit of doing."

Hindon smiled in a covert manner at the compromise with his conscience which his weak-minded master had made. Sir Thomas appeared to think that he was guilty of no crime or offence in condemning the rightful heir to the Wicherley estates to a life of obscurity. He robbed him of his property and of his title; he prevented him from being properly educated and taking his position amongst those with whom, by birth, he was entitled to rank and associate. He had told Hindon solemnly that he would permit no bloodshed, and Hindon had promised that no blood should be shed; and because he spared the boy's life, he thought he was entitled to unlimited praise for a magnanimous resolve.

This was shallow reasoning.

"Is that the house?" exclaimed Sir Thomas, pointing to an edifice, peeping through the trees, a little distance in front of them. "That must be Baskerdale. It is a fine place; I begin to take quite a fancy to it. 'Pon my word, that's very pretty; look at the moat, Hindon, and the castellated front. Quite feudal, eh? And the deer in the park; are you fond of venison, you dog, eh?"

"This must be Baskerdale," replied Hindon. "Isn't that some one coming to meet us? That must be the steward, of whom we heard from Sockton Sark. I shall in a day or two have the extreme pleasure of overhauling his accounts."

Mr. Lister appeared to have espied the baronet and his man from some part of the ground, for he walked quickly down the avenue with the palpable intention of meeting them. He approached with a smirk and a smile, and making a bow, said, addressing Sir Thomas:

"Pray, whom may I have the honour of addressing?"

"Sir Thomas Breckenridge Wicherley," replied Hindon, speaking for his master.

"Welcome to your new home, Sir Thomas," cried Lister. "I am proud and happy to have you amongst us. It is but a poor and sorry welcome; but the tenantry will assemble in crowds to do you honour, directly they know of your arrival. I didn't bruit your coming abroad, as I had received no instructions from you to do so. It was my impression that you wished to travel incog. and avoid display. My name is Thomas Lister; I have been on the estate for many years, and was the confidential agent of the late lamented Sir William."

"Well, Mr. Lister, just be good enough to lead the way to the house, and give us whatever you may have to eat. I suppose your cellar is well stocked? If so, bring up some wine."

"Not well stocked, Sir Thomas; although we have, I daresay, a couple of hundred dozen of one sort and another. You will have to lay down a few thousand bottles, Sir Thomas. I will do my best for you. There is some fine sparkling hock amongst other things."

"That will do," replied Sir Thomas, following Mr. Lister to the house.

Mrs. Stackpole must have worked with a will, for not a speck of dirt or a grain of dust was to be seen on the furniture. The windows shone like cut diamonds, and everything was the picture of cleanliness. Lister appeared to have lunch in readiness, for he brought up stairs, within a space of ten minutes, some hare soup, a fine trout, and a pheasant roasted to a turn. This, with some cream cheese, of Mrs. Stackpole's own making, completed a very nice repast; which was further augmented by walnuts and filberts, which gave a flavour and a zest to the port wine, which was as crusted and as full of beeswing as the most fastidious aldermanic toper could desire.

After dinner, Sir Thomas, followed by Hindon, and preceded by Lister, went all over the house, and was much pleased with what he saw. Baskerdale was a capital residence, well furnished—although the furniture was for the most part antique; when new, it was costly and expensive.

"Like the place, do you, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Lister. "Don't wonder at it; most people do. Nice

society down here, sir. You will have all the quality calling upon you before you have been here a week. The bounds are vacant, now, Sir Thomas. They want a new master. Keep a pack of hounds, sir, and you will make yourself the most popular man in the county."

Sir Thomas did not respond very heartily to this suggestion. He had no objection to being the most popular man in the county; but if the popularity was to be achieved by great personal exertion, he was inclined to decline it, as being too dearly bought.

The baronet—newly fledged as he was—liked Baskerdale very much, liked being addressed as Sir Thomas, and liked the fact of possessing so much property. He was as pleased as a child with a new toy, and yet every now and then some disquieting suspicion would flit across his mind, and visions of the flaxen-haired boy, saved from the wreck by the heroism of the keeper of the ferry, would float before him, and make him shudder involuntarily. Although he did not go to bed early that night, and ought to have been tired, he found it difficult to close his eyes. His conscience was awake; and while it was excited, he could not achieve repose, even of the most transitory kind, until both body and mind were completely worn out. He knew that as long as the boy lived, he was not the lawful possessor of Baskerdale.

He was an impostor.

That is plain language; but though the remark may seem harsh, it had the one great crowning merit of being true.

He was no more entitled to the baronetcy and estates than was Hindon or Lister, and he was well aware of the fact. It was this conviction of doing wrong that perturbed him and robbed him of his night's rest. He was not as yet, in sensation parlance, a double-dyed villain; but he was guilty of what is called conspiracy to defraud. He was conspiring with Hindon to defraud the boy Arthur; and he was liable at any time to be arraigned before the bar of the Old Bailey for an offence against the law of the land.

As a last resource, Sir Thomas lighted a Manilla cheroot, strongly steeped in opium, hoping that it would have a soporific influence, and he was not mistaken; as the grey dawn was breaking through the shutters, and flooding the room with an uncertain light, he fell into an uneasy slumber.

The next morning Hindon sought his master, booted and spurred, and accoutred as if for a journey.

"Is that you, Hindon?" exclaimed the drowsy baronet. "Brought my shaving-water?"

"Lister will bring it. I am going to town," replied Hindon, switching a small riding-whip in the air.

"To town?"

"Yes."

"And what for, pray, may I ask?"

"To arrange about the judicious bestowal of our juvenile friend at the ferry."

"Oh, I see! Are you not hasty, though? I don't exactly like being left in a strange place by myself; these fellows will not understand my ways. I shall get nothing done for me—nothing at all! Can't you put off your journey for a week or a fortnight, eh? Just think of it. Turn the matter over in your mind, Hindon."

"A delay, such as you suggest, might spoil all," returned Hindon, in a determined manner. "If the affair is to be managed properly—if, in fact, it is to be done at all, it must be done at once. If you wish to ruin your chance for ever, and risk the possession of Baskerdale, I will stop. I like to strike while the iron is hot; and I can tell you in half-a-dozen words what I propose to do. It will not look well for either you or me to be seen actively moving in the business; therefore I shall find out a trusty man in London, who will take the boy away, and bestow him safely, where he will be harmless."

"Well, well, you know best, Hindon! You always know best; but it is confounded hard that I should be left by myself," replied Sir Thomas.

"I shall be back again in three days," Hindon said, leaving the room as he spoke. He did not care about indulging in any further conversation with the baronet, who in certain matters connected with his personal comfort was almost childish.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROW'S NEST.

For my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can, therefore, take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones.—*Addison.*

In a low and aquid part of London, near the most densely-populated part of Spitalfields, was, and perhaps still is, a rookery which went by the name of the Crow's Nest. The police, having a wholesome regard for their lives, seldom, if ever, ventured within its

precincts; for it was the abode of thieves of the most desperate kind, and bad characters of every description.

Society always bands itself together against evil doers; therefore they are driven out of respectable localities and compelled to herd together wherever they can find house-room. The Crow's Nest was an agglomeration of what may be designated burglarious particles. It was not a court or an alley. It was a quiet-looking street, composed of two rows of three-story houses. In each house no less than four families lived. Some in the Crow's Nest contained more. Men, women, and children, all got their living by habitually breaking the law. The men would commit robberies in houses or in shops, the women picked pockets in public places and omnibuses, and the children, from their earliest infancy, were trained to sneak up and down crowded streets, and steal pieces of meat from butchers' shops, loaves of bread from bakers, bits of cheese and bacon from chandlers, and to otherwise replenish the family larder in a dishonest manner.

It so happened that Hindon was acquainted with a man who found a local habitation in the Crow's Nest. It was only natural that a man of mysterious antecedents, like Hindon, should occasionally have work of a dirty nature to transact, and with which he was unwilling to soil his own immaculate fingers. As it was necessary that the work should be done, and he was not disposed to undertake it himself, he had recourse to this individual, who was a skilful ruffian, for he generally contrived to conduct his nefarious enterprises in such a way as to escape the vigilance of his natural enemies, the police.

He was known by the name of Spanish Joe, a sobriquet which he had received from his associates on account of his morose and vindictive temper. He never knew much of his parents. Those who did not like him, and there were few who did, said he had Spanish blood in his veins, which accounted for his cognomen, as has been said.

Spanish Joe had done work for Hindon on more than one occasion, and had given his employer every cause to be satisfied with his execution of the orders he had received.

His terms were not extravagant.

Thieves as a rule, generally work in couples. Spanish Joe's friend, on all important occasions, was a dapper little fellow, called Gosh. How he had acquired so singular a cognomen it is impossible to say. It might have been his father's before him. He might have been given him at the font; but he always, when appealed to, declared that he knew nothing about it. Every one called him Gosh, and as the principal party interested—namely, himself—did not object to the monosyllabic nomenclature, he was never spoken of except as Gosh.

This little man was wonderfully agile. He was celebrated for climbing walls, and could jump over almost anything.

When climbing a high wall, he only provided himself with a handful of tennypenny nails, and a bit of brick for a hammer.

He knocked the nails into the wall, as he climbed up, going gradually higher and higher until he gained the top, the nails acting as supports for his hands and rests for his feet.

Both Spanish Joe and Gosh were fond of good living and drinking.

Whenever they committed a robbery, they took care that it should be one worth their while to commit; and they planned it for months beforehand, so as to make sure of being successful.

Their average was two robberies a year. On the proceeds of the spoil they lived for some time; and when they found themselves getting poor, they planned another.

They did not disdain easy and less risky work in the meantime.

Hindon went to an hotel on his arrival in town, and dined; after which, he got into a cab and went to the city.

On alighting from the cab, he walked towards Spitalfields, threading many a tortuous and winding thoroughfare—darting up alleys and through strange, gloomy-looking passages, which denoted, plainly enough, that he must have, at some period or other, resided in the neighbourhood, with the intricate street system of which he appeared to be perfectly familiar.

At one corner of the Crow's Nest was a public-house, called the "Stone Jug."

This was a place of fashionable resort with the Crow's Nesters, who passed much of their time within its hospitable precincts.

Instead of going into the "Nest," Hindon pushed open a door of the tavern, and looked around him.

His entrance caused quite a commotion among the round-faced, snub-nosed, and short-haired community. They thought most probably that he was a stranger in the land, and that it was their duty to take him in.

A dozen or fifteen men were grouped near the bar, drinking sundry beverages of a fiery and potent nature. Their faces were bad faces; and a physiognomist such as Lavater, gazing at them with critical acumen and professional interest, would have shuddered while being amused.

These twelve or fifteen men were, in their own proper persons, distinctive types of the criminal classes. That man with the shaggy eyebrows and bushy beard, with a scar on his left cheek—with the full and bulging lips, the flat nose, the low forehead, is capable of committing a murder; if he has not, in the course of his varied experience, done so already. The one to his left, undersized, with the whining voice and the hypocritical leer, is an arena-sneak; and so on.

Amongst the dozen men, there was not one who possessed a redeeming property or one good, soul-saving quality.

This sea-milage was the rank foliage and the luxuriant fruit of the guilt-garden close at hand. They were goat-birds and galloways—birds, to a man.

Hindon's gaze lighted on one individual with a loud voice and a coarse way of speaking.

This was Spanish Joe.

He beckoned to him; and the fellow obeyed the signal with alacrity, saying:

"Glad to see you, master. It's a goodish while since we met last."

When the crew to which he belonged saw that the new-comer was a friend of Joe's, they resumed their conversation, and no longer made an ocular butt of him.

It was a rule amongst the fraternity that the watch, purse, and pocket of a person known to any of their number should be sacred. Had it not been for this salutary regulation, it is not too much to say that Hindon would not have left the Stone Jug with a halpenny in his possession or a coat to his back—so lawless and predatory were the men amongst whom he had been rash enough to venture.

"We cannot talk here," replied Hindon. "Have you no quiet place to which we can go, where we shall be undisturbed, and enjoy comparative freedom?"

"You can come to what I call my apartments, squire," said Joe. "There's only my friend Gosh there. He's keeping house, because he's too drunk to get up; and small blame to him, seeing we went to a friendly meet two nights ago, and he took more than he could carry. An old crackman was just out of prison, his term of ten years being up. We all knew him well, and mustered in force down at Bluegate to do him honour. This way, squire—follow me."

Hindon did as the ruffian requested him, and entered a house, externally in a tolerable state of preservation.

The burglar did not, as might have been expected, ascend several flights of ricketty stairs, covered with dust and cobwebs, and odoriferous of anything but rose-water and trauipanni. He stopped at the first floor, saying:

"Here's my diggings, squire. I can't abear going up-stairs; it tires my legs and breaks my back."

He kicked a dirty-looking door open with his foot, and disclosed a scene of hideous untidiness, which was a near approach to dirt and squalor. Upon the floor, before the fireplace, lay the man he had called Gosh. He had contrived to roll over on to his back; and in that position, he snored with a vehemence that was really startling—no porcine creature, in all the agony of an enormous and unnatural accumulation of fat, could have made more noise.

The floor was uncarpeted, the ceiling black with the dust of ages and the flickering flare and smoke of innumerable candles; cobwebs abounded in every corner, containing such huge spiders that a timid person would have shrunk away, tearing the venomous bite of a tarantula. Upon a common clothes-deal table, in the centre of this apartment, stood sundry cans, which had, in hours gone by, contained beer, if it was fair to judge from the stains upon the wood. These were flanked by glass bottles, which had held quarters and half-pints of gin.

A couple of blankets lay in a heap upon a mattress which surmounted an iron bedstead. Some dirty water stood in a basin; which was placed on a chair, for want of a washstand. Several pieces of broken pipes lay about in all directions. This was the apartment which the fellow, borrowing a slang Australian phrase, spoke of as his "diggings."

Spanish Joe walked up to Gosh; and, kicking him in the ribs, cried:

"Now then, wake up, old Go-to-bed."

Gosh growled and moved an inch or two, afterwards snoring as profoundly as before.

"This noise won't do. I must put a stopper on this 'ere performance," continued Joe, coolly taking up the basin of dirty water and throwing it over his friend's head and shoulders.

Gosh sprang to his feet with a startled air, and sitting down on the edge of the bed, wiped the water from his eyes with the back of his hand.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Joe; "thought it was Niagara coming down on you, didn't you? You was a-driving your pigs to market a little too fast. I've got a gentleman here. Wake up, and show him some of your civility."

"What did you want to go and do that 'ere for?" said Gosh, in plaintive accents. "You've made me that wet I don't know how to move myself."

"It won't hurt you. It's likely to do your complexion a world of good. It isn't often that you and fresh water meet together. Now move yourself. The gentleman and me's going to have a palaver. Clean yourself down a bit, and ask the gentleman for half a sovereign; then go to the 'Jug' and get some brandy. Talking's dry work."

Gosh grumbled in a subdued manner at intervals; but did as he was directed. Hindon gave him the half sovereign, and he departed on his errand.

"Now's your time, sir. It's a clear field and no favour. You can talk your hardest, and no one but me to listen, and I'm bound to."

"I have had occasion to employ you before, my friend, on one or two little matters, which at the present time shall be nameless; and I have had every reason to be satisfied with the way in which you did your work. The job I have for you is not by any means a difficult one. I want a child put out of the way."

Spanish Joe drew his finger across his throat, and looked inquiringly at his employer.

"No, no—not that exactly; only I shall not tell you to halt at that, if it is absolutely necessary. I have made a sort of half promise that no blood should be spilled; and I was thinking that, as the boy lives near the sea, you could hire a boat, take him some distance from land, and drown him. It will be a quiet way of transacting the business, and one which will, I think, be preferable to overt violence. The verdict of the coroner's jury, if it should sit upon the body, will be found drowned; and, consequently, if you manage the affair with your usual skill and your accustomed ability, no blame can possibly attach itself to you."

"We'll do it, squire, and glad of the chance. Things is rather dull with us just now. Everybody's out of town, and it is what we call the 'off season.'"

"We!" repeated Hindon, "whom do you mean by we?"

"Gosh and myself. Gosh is him as you see mugging of it before the fireplace. We always work together, and there is not a better fellow, when sober, in all the 'school' than Gosh."

"You can trust him?" said Hindon, doubtfully.

"Trust him! ah. I'd trust him with untold gold, or my life either," replied Joe. "Oh! I know my man. We've been pals for more than fifteen years, on and off. Both Gosh and myself have been 'quodded' for short terms, but we have never been separated long at a time; and he always says that if I get shipped off to Spike Island, he'll do something desperate and follow me, so that we can get tickets-of-leave and do a little bushranging together in Australia. Though we should both of us be sorry to leave the Crow's Nest, the air of which agrees with our complaint wonderfully well."

"You must arrange your plan of action amongst yourselves," exclaimed Hindon. "I have suggested drowning—it is for you to act upon that suggestion if you think proper. At all events, I must have the boy removed. You fully understand that? I will pay you well for your trouble. The boy at present is living in a ferry-house, at the 'Wash.'"

In a short conversation, Hindon made Joe fully understand whom the boy was, and how he was to travel to arrive at the ferry.

The man, who was tolerably intelligent, listened patiently to these instructions, and promised to journey into Norfolk the next day, and put the lad out of the way.

Hindon gave Spanish Joe a sum of money, and took his leave of him, quitting London that night for Baskerdale, feeling perfectly sure in his own mind that the youthful Sir Arthur Wicherley had not long to remain in the land of the living.

The arrangement of this business was a great weight off his mind, for he took quite as much interest in the retention of the Baskerdale property as Mr. Thomas Breckenridge did, for he meant to feather his nest well in various ways during his residence at the old-fashioned house—the home of the Wicherleys.

CHAPTER IX.

UNEXPECTED SUCCESS.

Old Man.—Did I not hear the voice of an unfortunate?
Who is it complains thus?

Ataliba.—One almost by hope forsaken.

Pizarro.

TOM HARVEY remained upon the cold ground, where Lister had left him to die, for some time; the blood welled from his wounds, and he became very weak. In spite of the desperate way in which he had been attacked, his enemy did not succeed in depriving him of his life.

The waves beat against the shore with a sullen roar. Dark clouds over-shadowed the earth, and as far as appearances went, there was little chance of any good Samaritan coming along and ministering to the wounded man. Tom was dimly conscious; his ideas were confused; but he heard the rush of the tide against the pebbles on the beach, and the weird noise it made, as it retreated, dragging the unwilling pebbles after it. He could hear the flutter of a bat's wings, as the sable thing swept by in the darkness, making an eccentric circuit.

A sensation of acute pain made him recollect that he had been attacked by an assassin, and cruelly beaten; but he was incapable of making the least movement to save his life, to bind up his wounds, or to stagger towards his mistress's house.

As he lay upon the leaf-covered earth, he fancied he heard the sound of voices; a faint whisper as it seemed was borne towards him. The noise gradually became louder and louder. Suddenly he felt something come violently in contact with his feet.

"Hullo!" cried a voice, rather gruff than otherwise. "What have we here? Bring your lantern, Manley, and let us have a look at it, whatever it may be."

The light of a lantern was directly afterwards turned upon Tom's blood-stained countenance.

"A dead body, as I live," continued the first speaker. "There has been foul work here, my lads."

The men fell on their knees, and peered into Tom's face, felt his pulse, and made other signs for the purpose of detecting vitality, if there was any.

"He's not dead yet, either," he said; "but if he is not looked to, he soon will be. What do you say, Manley, shall we take him with us? I don't like the idea of leaving a man who has been shamefully knocked about to shift for himself."

"He might turn round on us afterwards."

"He's more likely to lend us a hand and be one of us."

"Well, please yourself. You ought to know best."

"We'll risk it, then. You take hold of his heels and I'll carry his head. We have not far to go."

The men into whose hands Tom Harvey had been fortunate enough to fall were smugglers. Their band was small. It consisted of seven men, and their smuggling operations were on a small scale. They were ostensibly fishermen, and frequently made large sums of money by netting the funny prey. It was not more than once in a dozen voyages that they went as far as the coast of France and took in a cargo. This careful mode of conducting their depredations upon the revenue was one of the principal reasons of their having for many years been undetected by the officers and men of the coast guard.

The smugglers generally chose stormy weather for their ventures, because it was easy to be blown out to sea, and even their comrades would not suspect them of doing a contraband trade when the only evidence against them was that they were out longer than the other vessels.

They lauded their lace and their brandy in a cave of large dimensions. This was their storehouse; and when they were desirous of taking any of their goods to market, they went to the cave, and loading themselves, took the various articles to London, which, being an immense place, engulfed them and obliterated their individuality.

The smugglers were on their way to their cave when they picked up Tom Harvey. They were in want of money; and as they had a quantity of fine Valenciennes lace, which was spoiling in the damp and mildew of their rocky haunt, they determined to take it to London and sell it.

None of these smugglers were fierce, lawless men. They were simply cunning, and a little dishonest. Their consciences would not have permitted them to rob their neighbours of a penny; but they regarded the Government and the revenue as an abstraction, to despoil which was no crime and no sin. The morals of seafaring people are sometimes lamentably lax. If they were to write an ethical treatise, they would probably say, "Keep the commandments, which do not tell you not to smuggle." This, of course, is nothing but sophistry; but they thought that as long as they could make a few pounds by smuggling, they had a perfect right to do so; and upon this fallacy they proceeded.

The cave in which they hid their smuggled goods was not far from where they had stumbled against Tom. A precipitous cliff reared its head between the ferry and Miss Rose Wicherley's house. At high water the cave could only be entered by rowing or swimming up to it, but when the tide was out it was easy to reach it by going ankle deep into the sea.

The peculiarity of the cave, which was only known to the smugglers, was this: at high water the entrance was two feet above the level of the waves, and the hole by which the smugglers entered was only just big enough to admit a man's body. It was a capital hiding place, for it stretched inland for a great distance, and the floor was steep, in some places

raising it so high 'as to prevent the waves in rough weather dashing through the hole of a doorway and doing any damage to the merchandise stowed away within.

When the smugglers reached the cave, one of their body threw a piece of rope over an iron hook which was driven into the rock just below the hole, and having hitched it, drew up a ladder made of the same material, which hung upon the hook; the smugglers one by one ascended. Manley watched them disappear through the orifice. Presently a piece of stout cord was lowered, and to that Manley attached Tom Harvey's body. It was drawn up and taken into the cave. Candles were lighted and a piece of board placed against the doorway to exclude the glare, which might have betrayed them.

The height of the cave was not more than eight feet in any part, in some places it was less. Here and there were stored little kegs of brandy; and large piles of boxes, containing expensive and valuable lace, liable to duty, were to be seen.

The leader of the smuggling band, whose name was Burton, was a well-known fisherman on the coast; he had a wife and family, and was considered a highly respectable man.

When all were in the cave and everything was snug, he exclaimed:

"Now, lads, stir yourselves, and see if you cannot find something soft for this poor fellow to lie upon. We shall have to doctor him ourselves."

Some matting was found, upon which Tom was laid; and by the aid of the united light of a couple of candles and the lantern, Burton proceeded to look at his hurts. He pushed aside the matted hair, and made a careful scrutiny. After which, he washed the wounds with some rain water, which fell through the roof and formed into a puddle on the floor; and finding an old shirt in a corner of the cave, bound up the sore places.

"He is not so much hurt, after all, lads. His wounds are skin deep; and now that I have stopped the bleeding, he will be well enough to leave with us in an hour or so, when we take our departure. Manley, pour a little brandy down his throat; it won't hurt him."

Manley did so; and Tom opened his eyes, and stared wildly round him.

"Where am I? and what has happened to me?" he exclaimed.

"You are with friends."

"What friends?"

"Those who have probably saved your life, and will not leave you till your troubles are over. How was it that you got those knocks on the head? Do you remember?" said Burton.

Manley gave him a little more of the stimulant which had proved so efficacious in his revival; and Tom sat up, supported by Manley's arm.

"Ah!" he said, in a feeble voice. "I begin to recollect now. Lister followed me."

"Who?" cried Burton.

"Lister, the steward at Baskerdale."

"Was he your assassin?"

"He struck me, for I saw him by the dim light, as he was beating the life out of me; and he has reason to dislike me, for he loves a woman who hates him and prefers me."

Burton was astonished at this revelation; for Lister had frequently bought things of them, and they had taken more than one keg of brandy up to the old house during Sir William's absence in Australia.

"I should not have thought Lister capable of such baseness," was Burton's mental exclamation.

"Who is the girl, my man?" asked Manley.

"Molly Goodall."

"The ferryman's daughter?"

"Yes."

"And a right down good girl she is, too. She is the girl for any man's money. Well, I am glad we happened to tumble across you, or it might have gone hard with you. There is little doubt that Mr. Lister is a dangerous enemy. He meant to murder you, and no mistake. Drink a drop more of this, and lay still for a while, until we have finished our work."

"What are you going to do with me? and who are you?" inquired Tom, whose ideas about things in general were still hazy.

"We are not going to do you any injury," replied Burton; "we are merchants. This is our marine or seaside warehouse, and we have come here expressly to remove some goods which are wanted elsewhere."

"Can you take me with you, wherever you are going? I shall be glad to work for you, as soon as I am strong enough. I want to puzzle Lister. He will be frightened out of his wits when he finds I have disappeared. I only wish to stay with you a week or so, until I can go about again without any inconvenience. I should like to appear suddenly upon the scene when everyone has given me up, and see what effect my apparition would have upon Mr. Lister."

The smugglers promised to do all they could for Tom Harvey, and when they had finished their arrangements, took him with them to a neighbouring village in which they lived. Burton gave him a bed in his own house, and left him in charge of his wife, while he went to London to dispose of the lace. The expensive fabric was always stowed away at the bottom of herring-barrels, so that no suspicion should be excited.

The little village of Flushing did not contain more than six families. The men were all fishermen and smugglers. In this little community Tom lived for ten days, and at the expiration of that time, was himself again, with the exception of shooting pains in his head whenever he undertook any great exertion.

One morning Burton came to him as he was wandering listlessly over the beach, and said:

"We have some claim upon your gratitude, Tom Harvey, and we think we can trust you."

"You need not have any doubt about that," replied Tom, with an expression of genuine feeling.

"You must have guessed, by this time, that we engage in smuggling now and then."

"I had surmised as much."

"Very well—that's a candid admission," said Burton. "We are going to make a venture to-night in our bark, the Fairy, and I should like you to accompany us."

"I!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, and for two reasons. In the first place, it would be satisfactory to us to have had you with us in one of our illegal journeys, because you would not betray us if any difference at any time arose between us."

"You need not fear that."

"I think not; but I like to make myself as safe as I can. My second reason is, that Manley—you know Manley?—is so seriously unwell that he cannot go with us. We are, therefore, short of hands, and you will fill up the gap uncommonly well."

"I would rather be excused," said Tom, hesitatingly.

"I cannot excuse you; and after what we have done for you—"

"Say no more," replied Tom, who was unable to refuse when he recollected how his life had been saved by the men who were now asking him to do them a trivial service—and yet not so very trivial as it seemed.

If the Fairy, as the smugglers called their vessel, should be captured by the revenue cutter which patrolled that part of the coast, Tom would be looked upon as one of the crew, and treated accordingly. He was a young man, and there was plenty of enthusiasm and generosity in his composition; therefore, he determined to do as he was asked, and travel to France with the smugglers in the Fairy.

The little party embarked in the morning, and, joining some other boats, began to fish, meeting with better luck than they wished; for they caught so many fish that there was a chance of the boat's hold being so full as to be unable to contain anything else.

Whilst Tom Harvey had been recovering his senses and regaining his strength amongst the smugglers of Flushing, Mary Goodall had been in a state of the most terrible suspense.

She had fully expected to see Tom the next evening, and had walked along the accustomed path with a view of meeting him; but she saw no one. The next night, and the one after that, brought with it the same result.

She could bear the suspense no longer.

Making some excuse to her mother, on the morning of the fourth day she set out for Miss Rose Wicherley's, intending to scold Tom for not having been to visit her, as he had promised, and as he was in the habit of doing.

The footman at Miss Wicherley's knew her, and exclaimed:

"Good morning, Miss Goodall. I was coming over to your place this afternoon."

"What for?" she inquired.

"To ask after Tom Harvey."

"I know nothing of him. I—I am here to-day to question you respecting him," replied Mary, with a choking sensation in her throat.

"We have not seen him since he went out for a couple of hours, saying that he should walk down to the ferry and back, for he did not feel well, and he thought a little exercise would do him good."

"Not seen him?"

"No; that we have not."

"God help me!" exclaimed poor Mary, staggering against the wall. "My presentiments have not deceived me. I knew something would happen to him!"

The footman calmed her as well as he was able; but Molly was not to be comforted.

"He has been murdered, I know he has!" she cried. "Mr. Lister hated him, and he has killed him. Oh! yes, he has killed him."

"Hush!" said the footman. "You must not say such things without you have evidence to support the allegation. Mr. Lister is a very respectable man, and incapable of doing such a thing."

"No, no. I tell you he is dead, and Mr. Lister has killed him!" persisted Mary Goodall, whose tears flowed like rain.

"Dead! who's dead?" exclaimed a voice at their elbow.

The footman looked round, and recognised the gardener.

"Why, it's a singular thing," he replied; "but Tom Harvey has been missing these four days."

"I know that," interrupted the gardener; "for I have had to do his work."

"Mary Goodall says that Mr. Lister, the steward of Baskerdale, has murdered him."

"Somebody got knocked about the other night," remarked the gardener.

"Where?"

"Why, down near the beach. I was coming along two days ago, and I saw a lot of blood scattered about; and on looking farther, I found a stone with human hair—that's as far as I could judge—adhering to it."

"You saw this?" gasped Mary.

"Ay, that I did, my lass; and I took the stone away and put it in the tool house, and the next day I mentioned the matter to the police sergeant at Rotherham, but I have heard nothing more of it," answered the gardener.

"Oh! he has been killed. I can see it all plain enough. His enemy has killed him and made away with his body. Oh! Tom is lost to me for ever. I shall never—never see him again."

The poor girl buried her face in her hands, and sobbed and cried with hysterical violence. It was a sad blow to her to think that her lover was dead, and why should she not think it? There was every sign of a great crime having been committed recently.

Mr. Lister had great reason to dislike and even hate Tom Harvey, not only for being his rival in Mary's affections, but for the treatment he had received at his hands when he had been found behind the hedge.

"Come, come. Don't take on like that," exclaimed both the footman and the gardener in a breath. "He may be right enough after all. There is no dead body about, and that is one thing to give us hope."

Mary looked up at this suggestion.

"Will you go with me to Rotherham," she said, "and help me put the matter in the hands of the police?"

"Oh, yes. I'll do that with pleasure, and I hope something may come of it."

When Mary had recovered sufficient command over herself to walk along without crying, she told the gardener she was ready, and they started together for Rotherham to inform the police of certain suspicious circumstances which they imagined might lead to the discovery of the murderer of one Thomas Harvey, who at that identical time was gradually regaining his health in the diminutive village of Flushing a few miles off.

The Fairy made her trip to Havre, under cover of the night, and took in a valuable cargo.

Barton, Manley, and his other friends were growing tired of the venturesome trade in which they had been indulging. They had all made a small sum of money out of it, and they had profitably invested this sum in a bank, so as to give them something to look forward to in their old age.

The smugglers resolved that this should be their last trip, although they had made the same resolution once or twice before.

The cargo they had on board the Fairy was rich, though not varied, and they fully expected to run it successfully, as they had run all their former cargoes.

The smugglers intended to run straight home and land their fish, which would take them all day, and when darkness arrived they could fill a boat with their contraband goods, and float down to the cave at high water.

As day broke, Burton was on deck, sweeping the horizon with a powerful telescope. Suddenly his countenance fell, and he called all the crew forward, ordering them to spread every inch of canvas to the breeze.

The men looked at the terrified expression of their captain's face, and wondered why he was so agitated.

They obeyed his order with alacrity. In half-an-hour's time a trimly-built vessel hove in sight. She was crowding all sail, and following in the wake of the Fairy.

Burton had every reason to feel alarmed; for this trimly-built vessel was the famous revenue cutter *Firefly*; and she seemed to have an especial and well-defined object in bearing down upon the Fairy, which she was coming up with, hand over hand.

The smugglers looked at one another, and appeared ill at ease.

(To be continued.)

LORD HARTINGTON, we greatly fear, "enjoys" the misery of corns. His Lordship, although heir to the Duchy of Devonshire, has toes to be trodden on, or he never would have sent, as he did, divers respectable gentlemen before the Erith jury to depose that one and all the inhabitants of the place may tell "pale-hearted fear it lies," and sleep in spite of the Purfleet magazines. Well, we are glad to find that nobles are a little sensitive, and that the purple robe of aristocracy does not ever cloak a granite heart. Lord Hartington has quite satisfied us that the safest of all places to live near is a powder-magazine, and that when we smoke our next cigar, the best situation we can choose is a seat on the top of a Government powder-barrel.

THE ARCHDUKE.

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER XV.

Adela.—Come, my child! Come, wipe away thy tears, and show thy father A cheerful countenance. See the tie-knot here is off—this hair must not hang so dishevelled. Come, dearest, dry thy tears up! They deform Thy gentle eye. Well, now,—what was I saying? Yes, in good truth, this Piccolomini Is a most noble and deserving gentleman.

Theresa.—Believe me, I cannot sustain his presence!

Schiller.

THE consternation of Senor Mar at the sudden appearance of Captain de Valde did not immediately culminate.

It was not till he had marked the glances of affection passing between the lovers, and observed the mutual embrace with which they separated, that his blinding rage and apprehension took full possession of him.

"Accursed fatality! that he should rescue her," he muttered. "I suppose they are thoroughly infatuated with each other. How her eyes shone and face glowed as she told of his actions! And how completely captivated he appeared! Why should such a misfortune as this befall me? I shall have to use all my authority to break up this business and make her carry out my wishes. Yes, yes, I shall have to adopt stern measures!"

With a face in keeping with these gloomy thoughts, he hastened to the count.

The consternation expressed on Mar's face was fully equalled by that of his fellow-plotter.

"A bad business this meeting," said the former, in husky tones. "Captain de Valde has turned up sooner than we expected, and I think that he and Ada are in love with each other. Would that she had rather been killed by the Comanches, or doomed to remain for ever among them!"

The count turned towards Mar, with a forced smile on his pinched and changing features, responding:

"It may not be as bad as you think. Ada is like all girls—romantic and easily captivated by a show of bravery. But it is not likely that they have come to an understanding with each other, and it may be in my power to induce her to marry me!"

"The good saints grant that you may," fervently exclaimed Mar. "The sooner you make your wishes known to her, the sooner her mind will be diverted from that guerilla chief!"

"You are right, my friend," said Viletto, turning to a mirror, and giving a complacent look at his reflection. "The sooner I find out the wishes of Donna Ada, the better for us both!"

Senor Mar moved nervously about the apartment, and finally seated himself, remarking:

"You know my heart is set on uniting Ada to you, count; and I am sure a proper setting forth of the advantages you can give her cannot fail to make an impression. The girl is not a fool, to prefer a penniless guerilla, upon whose head a price is set, to a nobleman who will elevate her to a high rank at the new court."

"I shall hasten to see," returned his guest, donning his sombrero. "Wait here, if you please, and you shall soon see me!"

With a smile, the count left the dwelling, sauntering down the avenue towards the spot where the maiden was seated.

It was a part of his policy to affect coolness and indifference in the matter when conversing with Senor Mar, but he was far from feeling easy about it. He had not failed to notice the noble physique and intellectual countenance of his rival, and to acknowledge to himself that he did not appear well in contrast; and he inwardly cursed the fate that had thrown the young couple together.

Nothing of his inward perturbation was visible, however, as he approached Ada, carrying in his hand a bunch of snowy blossoms, which he handed her, saying:

"Allow me to present you a humble type of your-

self, senorita, with my earnest congratulations at your safe return to your home and friends."

Ada roused herself from her happy reverie, and, after a moment's hesitation, took the flowers, expressing her thanks for them and for the count's good wishes towards her.

"It is natural," added Viletto, seating himself at her side, "to do homage to the pure and beautiful, wherever we find it. But how remarkable has been your preservation, senorita, from those cruel savages! Your father and I scoured the country for you, without results, and we were settling ourselves in the blackness and bitterness of despair, when we beheld your return."

Ada's olive cheeks flushed to the hue of the ripe pomegranate, and her lustrous eyes glowed and shone like stars, as she said:

"I should have been for ever lost to home and friends, Count Viletto, had it not been for the brave Captain de Valde. He risked his life continually to save mine."

The count bit his lips at the enthusiasm of Ada's tones; but replied, softly:

"True, he acted bravely; but he could do no less, after seeing you. I could face a thousand deaths for such an object, Ada. One loving glance from your bright eyes, one sweet smile from your red lips, would be sufficient reward for the sacrifice of my life!"

The flush of embarrassment that came and went in the girl's cheeks, and the shifting lights in her eyes, caused the count to pause a moment in admiration of her, and then he continued:

"My last few words have told you all, Ada—that I live but in your smile, rejoice but in your approval. I have made several visits to the hacienda of late, and you were the bright lodestone that drew me hither. Ada, sweet love, will you be my wife?"

He took the maiden's hand, and looked into her eyes, that seemed like a wood-spring with the shadows upon it, and awaited her reply.

The girl withdrew her hand quietly, and said:

"I, of course, feel flattered at the honour you propose, Count Viletto, but I cannot be your wife."

"But I love you," pleaded the count. "Can you throw away the boundless love I offer you, Ada?"

The maiden had always experienced a painful sense of the count's insincerity and hypocrisy; but she did not fail to see that he was influenced by a genuine affection for her—that he really loved her as much as it was in his nature to love. Her manner, therefore, was very gentle as she again refused his offer of marriage.

"You reject my love, then—the position as countess I offer you, and all the advantages you would have as my wife?" exclaimed the count. "If you have no pity for me, think of your own future, at least, Ada."

"I do think of it," replied the maiden, the light of a happy soul struggling through the shadow on her countenance; "and to show you how useless it is to plead farther, Count Viletto, I will tell you that I am already promised in marriage; that I have betrothed myself to one who possesses my whole heart."

Viletto's face was fairly livid as he heard this frank confession; but he controlled his emotions, and said:

"I suppose your words refer to Captain de Valde. Can you be ignorant that his father has fled from the country, taking with him his own money and his son's? Can you have reflected that the young captain is penniless, with a price set on his head, and that he can never be anything or anybody under the new empire?"

Ada was too artless and nobly honest to deny her love, and she replied, quietly:

"I am aware of some of the circumstances to which you allude—although I was not aware that the marquis had left the country."

"And yet you cling to the captain?"

"Yes—why not?" and her beautiful face became radiant with her loving devotion. "If Captain de Valde is poor, I can assist him to obtain riches."

"But he's an outlaw," added the count, "and will probably be shot the instant he is taken by the French—an event that cannot be far distant."

"Well, if such is to be his fate, I can die with him. I would sooner be united in death with Captain de Valde than wed the proudest monarch living!"

"What infatuation! what folly!" exclaimed Viletto, in a voice half-choked by his passion. "Can I believe my senses? Is it possible that you are so carried away with a sudden passion for this man?"

"You can call my sentiments by any name that pleases you, Count Viletto," said Ada, with womanly dignity, as she arose. "It is enough for me to repeat, once for all time, that I cannot accept your proffer of marriage, or ever be more than a friend to you."

"But your father has led me to expect the acceptance of my suit," rejoined Viletto, "and candour compels me to say, in justice to him, that I do not and

cannot accept your present rejection of my offer of marriage as final."

"But it is final, senor," declared the maiden, haughtily.

"Perhaps so—you certainly think so at the present moment," the count responded. "But we know, your father and I, what women are—what vagaries possess them—what flighty dreams so often disturb the good sense of young girls. I do not forget, senorita, that you are a mere child; that you are entirely under the control of your father, and that this passing stranger, to whom you have so thoughtlessly given your love, will soon be out of my way, if not out of the world. For these and other good reasons, I decline to accept the ridiculous ideas you are pleased to announce as your decisions. The only decision you can make in the premises is to decide on obedience to your respected and honoured father!"

Ada had been more astonished than angered at the cool insolence of her suitor; but it was with a look of angry scorn that she said:

"Enough of this, Count Viletto! I will thank you to leave me!"

"Oh, very well. I obey, but hope you will be in a more favourable mood at our next meeting."

He arose, with a heart burning with evil passions, and proceeded to the dwelling, while Ada resumed her seat.

"Did you succeed?" cried Senor Mar, as the villain entered his presence. "What does she say?"

"She says she's engaged to Captain de Valde, and she seems completely infatuated with him. She ordered me from her presence with the air of a queen."

"Dios!" cried Senor Mar, springing to his feet, "is it possible?"

"Yes," returned the count, with a savage bitterness in his tones and face; "and she declares herself disgusted with me. So, I may as well give her up, and you will do well to lay aside your dreams for the future—for I assure you that the father-in-law of Captain de Valde won't be very welcome at the Emperor's court."

Notwithstanding this declaration, Viletto had no intention of giving up Ada. On the contrary, the difficulty she had thrown in his path had increased his fierce determination to possess her.

The rage of Senor Mar on hearing the last remark of the count was beyond description.

"Engaged, is she?" he cried. "We'll soon see if she's engaged! Pretty times these are, when a girl dares engage herself without her father's consent! And ordered you away, did she? Dios! I will see her."

Viletto resumed his cool and easy manner, as Mar became more and more wrathful; and at length, when the latter rushed from the house, hastening towards his daughter, the count arose and watched the interview from one of the grated windows.

"Well, senorita," said Mar, addressing his daughter with assumed calmness, "what do you mean by your infamous treatment of my guest, Count Viletto? How dare you order him from you, on my grounds?"

Ada was astonished at the unusual anger of her father, and replied, deprecatingly:

"Indeed, father, Count Viletto forgot himself in sneering at my preserver, Captain de Valde."

"And you have engaged yourself to this guerilla chief?"

"I have!"

The eyes of father and daughter met in a steady gaze—Mar's expressing rage and determination, and Ada showing her firmness and resolution.

"See here, then," said Senor Mar; "let me reason with you, child. You know the dreams of my life—my ambition for a title, and desire for rank. Now, Ada, if you cling to this guerilla, you not only upset and spoil all my plans, but make me an object of distrust to the French, so that it will be impossible for me to ever be anything more than a farmer. Indeed, you may be the means of driving me from the country, or confiscating my property, making me a beggar in my old age!"

The tears sprang to Ada's eyes, and her lips quivered as she said:

"Oh, father, no one would touch you on Hernan's account. But if they did, you should share our last real and our last crust. Why not join the liberal cause, and support the constitutional president? Why listen to Count Viletto's traitorous propositions?"

"Why not be a fool, as you are?" angrily demanded her father. "But, Ada," he added, his tones softening in pretended grief, "you will break my heart! Have I not been always foolishly indulgent to you, leaving you entirely to the care of your learned and darling Carlota during your childhood? What have I done, that you should turn on me and disobey me in the dearest wish of my heart?"

"I do not wish to disobey you, father," said Ada, with a sob which she could not restrain; "but, oh, I love Hernan, and I cannot marry any one else!"

"Nonsense! If you marry Count Viletto, love

will come with time. Think what you fling from you in refusing him. There is no girl in Mexico but would jump at your chance of becoming a countess or duchess—for I don't doubt but Viletto will be a duke under the new empire. Stop your silly plea of loving Hernan." And he sneered. "You must obey me."

"In all things but this, father," said Ada, respectfully, but firmly. "I must be true to Captain de Valde, whom I shall marry!"

At this declaration, so quietly uttered, yet so sweepingly hostile to his schemes, Mar sank back upon his seat, speechless with surprise and wrath.

"If you had desired me to have no idea but yours, and no guide of action but your wishes," added Ada, apologetically, "you should have commenced my education sooner. Need I remind you that I have grown up under your eyes, instead of being brought up under your counsels? In all the long years of my childhood, you left me to myself, to my own resources, or rather to the guidance of my good duenna, Carlota?"

"Don't mention her name to me!" interrupted Mar, finding his voice. "She made a fool of you. I wish she had died years before she did!"

"Father, I am shocked! You know that she was both wise and good, and you have always acknowledged the fact until this moment. She was truly amiable and deserving—truly devoted to me; and supplied, as far as any being could, the place of that mother who was so early and mysteriously taken from me!"

"Mysteriously?" repeated Mar, with flaming eyes.

"I say mysteriously," returned Ada, "because you have always been so reserved about her, keeping her life and death, and, indeed, her whole history from me. Your conduct in this one regard is sufficient to account for our present variance, and is a warrant for it. Had you treated me with fatherly love and confidence, I should have been less accustomed to rely upon my own opinion. As it is, I must be true to myself, to the light I have gained, to my own perceptions of duty. Especially must I decide for myself whom I will marry. That decision is already made, and it is unchangeable. While I regret beyond measure to oppose your wishes, justice to Captain de Valde and myself requires me to be explicit. I therefore declare that, just as certainly as I exist, so certainly shall I marry Captain de Valde, if I ever marry!"

For the time being, Mar could only glare at the speaker.

"My apologies for this frankness are many," Ada resumed, after a brief pause. "For some time past, and especially since the Maximilian folly took definite shape, you have been speculating upon my hand and heart, as so much available merchandise. You have denied all my prayers for light concerning my mother. You have been in your confidence the Count Viletto, who is—as I have instinctively seen from the first moment of my acquaintance with him—unworthy of either love or respect. You have been full of schemes and plots, dictated by self-interest and a false ambition, and having for their basis the betrayal of your country and the repudiation of my best instincts, aspirations, and affections. Seeing all these evil things gathering around me, I have had the choice of crushing them or being crushed by them. This choice I have made. I have learned to think for myself—to know what is right, as concerns myself and others. And now, father, I want you to understand that I will never marry the Count Viletto, or join you in your political projects—never, never!"

The surprise and rage of Senor Mar culminated at these firm declarations. He listened to them with such an aspect as a man might have surveyed the sudden rising of a volcano from the midst of a quiet plain. In a sort of stupefaction, occasioned by his consternation, he continued to glare upon her for a full minute after she had ceased speaking, and then he said:

"There is no use in wasting more time upon you. Loving or unloving, you shall be the wife of Count Viletto! Until you can make up your mind to obey me, and accept him, you will remain in close confinement. You shall see that parents are not without authority in this country. Notwithstanding your defiance, I am your master!"

He caught her arm in a fierce grip, and dragged her to the house and her own chamber, where, after renewed manifestations of anger, he left her.

CHAPTER XVI

Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepest stained with sin,
For aye impending awe
The unfathomable guilt within.
The horror of their deeds to view
Such grief with such men well agree,
But wherefore—wherefore, tell me?
Walspuris Night.

The anxiety of Captain de Valde respecting his

father caused him to ride swiftly between the hacienda and his paternal estate.

Avoiding Zacatecas by a detour to the eastward of the village of Veta Grande, and taking every possible care to avoid attracting attention, he rode on as fast as the speed and strength of Pacheco's mule would permit him, without losing sight of his new follower. As he neared his home, he slackened his speed and said:

"I need not tell you, Pacheco, that we live in troublesome times. Neither need I remind you that, of all masters, you have chosen one who stands in the utmost danger. One of my objects, therefore, in accepting your services, was to have a man near me who is familiar with Donna Ada's whereabouts. If, at any time, any evil should happen to me, you will make your way to her, through your Dolores, and inform her, with all possible tact and gentleness of my misfortunes."

The squire promised a faithful compliance with these injunctions, and they rode on, soon coming in sight of Hernan's home. Not a person was visible about the premises, and the closed doors and windows added to the gloomy impression the young man received from his first view of the mansion.

"I see no one, Pacheco," he said. "I fear something has happened."

He dashed into the grounds surrounding the house, and took his way to the front door, the squire keeping as close as possible to him, and manifesting a nervousness that did not promise very well for his renown and success as a warrior.

The old servitor appeared at the entrance of the court, followed by a couple of his fellow-servitors. The faces of all were gloomy.

"What has happened, Rafael?" asked Hernan, as he alighted.

"Your father is gone!" the old servitor replied, in a voice broken by sobs.

"Gone, Rafael?"

"He disappeared some time in the night, between last evening and this morning, and we none of us knew anything about it."

The shock this communication gave our hero kept him momentarily speechless. Leaving his horse to the care of a servant, he entered the court, and was followed by Rafael and Pacheco.

"Disappeared!" he at length repeated, passing from room to room. "How can this be?"

"His bed had been occupied," the old servitor continued, "and shows that he was aroused from it in the night. We left it as we found it, that you might judge from it!"

Hernan had now reached the bed-chamber of the marquis, and he instantly noticed that the blankets were turned down, and that there was a depression in the centre, where the marquis had lain. It occurred to him, as he surveyed the scene, that the bed-chamber was in rather a retired position from the rooms occupied by the servants, and he demanded:

"Did none of you hear anything?—any calls for assistance? or sounds of intruders?"

The answer was a general negative.

"Nor see any blood-stains, or other signs of a struggle?"

None had been seen—none were visible.

"Another singularity," whispered Rafael, coming close to Hernan, "is, that one of the cellar-floors is torn up, and that a sub-cellar is found beneath it."

"Ah! let's see."

They hastened to the cellar, the old servitor explaining by the way that he had kept the last fact from the knowledge of the other servants, presuming that there was some fact connected with the secret cellar that it was not well to make a subject of wonder.

"Quite right!" was the comment of Hernan, as they entered the cellar, looking themselves in; and Rafael produced a light he had left burning in one of its niches. "There was a secret involved in this lower cellar."

He descended through the opening described in a previous chapter, and the first glance he threw around the little apartment told him that his father's wealth—gold, diamonds, and all, including the iron chest containing it, was gone!

"I could find nothing here," remarked Rafael—"nothing but this empty place."

"And yet this vault contained, only a few days ago, millions of dollars in gold and diamonds," said Hernan, turning upon the faithful old servant, with the sudden confidence induced by his anguish.

"My father's wealth was all concealed here in the form mentioned. Where are those chests? Did you not see or hear anything that would throw some light on their removal?"

Rafael had heard nothing—had not even suspected the late presence of the money, nor gained the slightest information that could apply to its removal.

"The next discovery I made," he went on, as soon as his emotions would permit, "was that a long and

narrow ladder had been placed against the side of the house, and that the footprints of two men were visible on the lawn, beside the marks of the ladder. From this I formed the theory that two men came at dead of night, gained the roof by a ladder, penetrated to the bed-chamber of the marquis, searched the whole house, and finally retreated, carrying him away with them."

Hernan paled, but did not immediately reply, further than to suggest that he would look at the footprints, and the marks of the ladder. This was soon done, and he then said, in tones of the deepest anguish:

"Your theory is right, Rafael. Some men have gained admittance to the house, and carried my father off, while you were all sleeping."

The old servitor burst into tears.

"There! there! I do not say that he was carried off to reproach you, my good Rafael," declared Hernan. "I only express the end and conclusions to be derived from all these circumstances. He's gone, and in the way you suggest. He was very feeble, you know, and could not have made much resistance. The two men probably gagged him, or otherwise prevented him from speaking or calling for assistance. Perhaps they killed him, and took away his body to suggest that he had fled, or to conceal the fact of his murder."

The servitor was too grief-stricken to utter a word, and it was many moments before Hernan could so far control his own agonizing emotions as to continue:

"But two men, Rafael, could not remove all those chests, much less remove them over the roof. Was the court door open this morning, or had it been opened?"

"No; we found the outer doors and all the windows as secure as ever. The inside doors, of course, were open, as usual. It was not till the marquis failed to come to breakfast, long after the usual hour, that I went to his room—to find him missing."

The afflicted son reflected a moment, and then said:

"It is clear that the two men did not get the money. In the first place, they could not have removed it. In the second, they would have had no motive in carrying my father off with them had they once secured the treasure."

Rafael exclaimed that he knew not what to think of the affair—that it was a horrible mystery to him.

"If my father had surprised the intruders," continued Hernan, still thoughtfully musing, "he would have raised an alarm. It's more likely that they surprised him and rendered him speechless—God only knows how! They would have had to make many journeys to remove the treasure; but I see no signs of such movements, only the footprints of two men coming and going. The retreating footsteps of one of them are deep, as if he bore a heavy object, evidently my father, either dead or gagged and bound."

Hernan here became silent, having pursued the agonizing subject as far as reason could lead him.

The night of anguish and vain search that followed can be imagined. Suffice it to say that the young man searched the whole vicinity, assisted by Pacheco and his other servants, in hopes to acquire some certain facts respecting the horrible mystery; but he found nothing. The footsteps of the intruders were lost in some bushes near the house, and there the disappearance of the marquis and his treasure became wrapped in darkness and dread.

(To be continued.)

THE Glasgow Herald announces the death of Miss Oswald, of Scotstown, at the age of 97. "Harry Brougham" was born next door to her father's house in Edinburgh, and she remembered him as a little boy running about in petticoats.

LORD PALMERSTON is busy, improving his Broadlands property, and reckons considerably on the future issue of his present work. May he live long to enjoy it! It seems he planted some trees a trifle of fifty years ago, and they have grown up to be strong and stately, and he has wished to annex them to his park, but been deterred by a road which passed between them and his mansion. He has just got the power to divert the road, and is doing so, bringing the body of juvenile green growth within the margin of his private park, and under his own parental wing.

ROWING MATCH FOR £50.—TOM KING and MAR.—It is but seldom that we see any public man depart from that line of sport which he has followed from his youth. In this race, however, a deviation has been made from the general rule, by none other than Tom King, the celebrated ex-champion of the P.R. When King, the celebrated ex-champion of the P.R. When that worthy announced his intention of retiring from the ring, his backers took it into their heads that Tom's splendid length of reach which characterised him would be admirably adapted to the sculling boat; therefore they tried him, and finding him likely to shine on the water, matched him against Edward May, of Lambeth. The stake was for £25 a-side, the

distance Putney to Mortlake, and the men appeared at the post on Tuesday, both looking exceedingly well, particularly King, who presented the remarkable instance of a sculler weighing thirteen stone. King got away as he pleased, rowed at his ease, and reached Mortlake a winner by ten lengths, in twenty-seven minutes, on a fine tide.

THE DOUBLE SHIPWRECK.

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE to the southward of Carysfort Reef, on the coast of Florida, the shore assumes a picturesque and rugged aspect, rising in some places like towers, and looking upon their frowning visage in the calm, clear depths below. There the whole ocean comes pouring its briny floods, and dashing its billows high in air, when the storm-king sweeps with a dismal howl over its furrowed bosom, and the trembling ships, with furl and shattered wings, are tossed about at the mercy of the blast, like detached thistle-down in the embrace of the shrieking hurricane.

A light-ship is now floating at her heavy moorings, throwing its beacon rays far over the waters of the trembling sea, and pointing out the dangerous reef to the eyes of the watchful mariner; but in the days of the Revolution—the period at which we have chosen to open our story—all was solitude and silence along that dreary coast; solitary, save the occasional visitation of a piratical band, who might chance to disembark to procure wood and water; silent, save the occasional shriek of the roaring sea-bird, as he winged his lonely way along that uninhabited shore.

About two miles from the reef alluded to, may still be seen the opening to an extensive cavern, which extends for several hundred yards into the very heart of the rugged cliffs that frown above the wide blue sea. It is some thirty feet in height, and arched like the fretted roof of some Gothic cathedral, and into its dim recesses the sunlight seldom penetrates, save at the early morning hour, when the day king, like a glow of fire, wheels his glowing face out of the briny waves, and glides the purpling east with his effulgent rays.

It was towards the sunset of a lovely day in June in the year 1776, and all nature seemed to rejoice in the brightness and glory that reigned through earth and sky, a man emerged from the opening of the cavern, and shading his eyes with a hand delicate and singularly fair, he gazed off over the sparkling waters of that sunlit sea, which threw its foam-crested billows playfully at his very feet.

He was young—seemingly not more than thirty, and with features at once noble and prepossessing. He was clad in a plain suit of black cloth, which, though seedy and the worse for wear, still bore evidence of fashion and gentility, and altogether there was something in his appearance which was well calculated to attract the attention of any person that might chance to have met him, even in the crowded thoroughfares of a populous city; then how much more so in that lonely retreat on the shores of that trembling sea?

"Oh, lonely—lonely is my lot!" said the stranger, as he gazed over the waters of the heaving main; "cut off from the world and all I hold dear, here must I spend the remainder of my days, far from the scenes of my childhood—from my boyhood's home! I cannot even tell in what part of the world I am. Were I to leave my present retreat, where could I go? Nothing could be obtained upon this lonely beach to appease the pangs of hunger; and had I not been so fortunate as to save a large proportion of the stores from the wreck of the Hannibal, when she was cast upon this lonely shore, and all save myself perished, I should now be in a most deplorable plight. Well, I suppose I must remain here, and make yonder cave my home until such time as deliverance comes. I have provisions enough to last for another year, and ere that period expires, something may turn up to my advantage. But, oh! could I but once get the authors of my present misery into my power—it would be a woeful day to them. But there goes the sun behind those western hills, and he sinks amid a mass of angry clouds. The breeze, too, begins to moan and sigh as it sweeps athwart the sea. I think there will be a heavy storm to-night, from the indications of things. Well, thank God, the poor outlaw has a cave into which he can retire and find a shelter, and there listen to the wild roar of the elements unharmed. Verily, there is no situation in life but has its pleasures as well as its pains."

And uttering these words, the stranger slowly turned away and entered the cavern.

In the town of Harwich, on the western bank of one of England's loveliest rivers, in a noble mansion surrounded by an extensive park, dwelt Sir Reginald Woodville, a gentleman high in the confidence of the government, and possessing so much of wealth that he was looked up to and regarded with a sort of veneration by those that were not so well provided with

the good things of life. Riches will always command the respect and admiration of the throng; and so Sir Reginald was enabled to lord it over his fellow-mortals, and, as a consequence, became somewhat haughty and overbearing in his deportment.

The baronet was somewhat reserved in his manners, and seldom admitted any but men of real rank and gentility to his society. Among these, however, may be mentioned the officers of a British regiment of dragoons, which had its quarters in the neighbourhood. These gentlemen were very fond of visiting the mansion of Sir Reginald; but whether it was his society they courted, or that of his pretty daughter Blanche, we shall leave it for our readers to determine.

Blanche Woodville, at the time of the opening of our tale, was just seventeen—lovely and charming as a houri. Her dark brown hair hung in showering ringlets over our alabaster shoulders, while her lithe and slender figure was full of elegance and grace. Her eyes, of a jet black, were full of tenderness and feeling, one moment languishing and soft, and the next flashing with animation, as different emotions flitted across her soul; and her smile was as sweet as the breath of roses in the morning of their earliest prime.

What wonder then that the British cavalry officers were fond of frequenting the mansion of the baronet, or that scarcely a day passed in which the rich uniforms of the corps could not be seen flitting up the gravelled pathway that led to such brilliant charms?

Among the most constant of the visitors to the house was young Sir Edward Harcourt, major of the regiment, and the son of a most honourable sire.

Descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors, he had that high and lofty bearing which the possession of actual rank is so apt to give; and an occasional curl of the lip, when any one chanced to differ from him in opinion, told more plainly than words how highly he esteemed himself.

Harcourt, from the first, had always been a favourite with Sir Reginald; for there was, in fact, something very similar in their natures and dispositions, and it was generally supposed throughout the neighbourhood that the young major was a successful suitor for the fair hand of the Lady Blanche.

At any rate, it was pretty certain that Sir Reginald would not be very likely to oppose such a union with much tenacity; for it was evident that he left the young couple together as much as possible, and that he made no secret of his regards for the gay officer.

But whether Blanche herself was so well disposed to favour his suit was a question which admitted of much doubt; and to none more so than to Robert Tracy, a gentleman who, for some years back, had been assiduous in his attentions to the charming girl—albeit those attentions, for reasons of his own, were kept secret from the proud old baronet.

Mr. Tracy was the son of a wealthy merchant that some years before had retired from active business, and had purchased an estate at no great distance from that of Sir Reginald.

The very proximity of the two dwellings had a tendency to frequently throw Robert and Blanche into each other's society, notwithstanding the father of the latter, through a sort of stubborn pride of birth, refused to associate with the sire of the former, or to admit his son as a visitor to the hall.

Little, however, did either of the young couple care for that: the green earth was around them, studded with forests and hedges, with the calm, blue sky looking down upon them; and they were not at a loss for a place to meet, when, as might be expected, mutual vows were ere long exchanged, and a solemn promise that their fortunes should be united, let the consequences be what they might.

CHAPTER II.

It was a fine evening in the summer of 1775, and Sir Reginald and Major Harcourt were seated in the spacious parlour of the hall. The young officer had just proposed for the hand of the gentle Blanche, and had received an answer favourable to his wishes.

"But," said the father, "I have not as yet consulted the girl in regard to the matter. Perhaps it would be as well for me to send for her, and inform her of the honour that you have done her, and know in what light she views it; though it is my determination that she shall second my views in every thing."

"Yes, let her be sent for by all means," replied the major; "although I should not be surprised were she to oppose the marriage to the utmost."

"Ah! what mean you?" inquired Reginald, in a tone of alarm; "what reason have you to suppose that, sir?"

"Simply because I have heard it rumoured that she was very partial to that young Tracy who resides on the hill yonder, and that they have been in the

habit of meeting clandestinely in the forest and other places, when they thought they were free from observation."

"What! that contemptible young Bob, as we style him—the son of the retired shop-keeper?"

"The same, Sir Reginald."

"That cannot be, I think. The fellow is an enemy to his king; and I could, if I chose, denounce him to the authorities and have him transported for life as an incendiary and dangerous individual. He'd better beware how he crosses my path, or he may wake up some fine morning and find himself a resident of Botany Bay."

"Or perhaps on board a man-of-war, eh? where he would serve his Majesty," suggested the major, in a low tone.

"The very thing. Do you know the officer commanding the press-gang on this station?"

"Intimately. I can have the young bantam seized and put on board a cutter any night I choose."

"And you will do it, providing Blanche should refuse your offer, and we should have reason to suspect that an attachment exists between them?"

"Ay, that I will," said the major, grinding his teeth with ill-suppressed ire; "but, hark! I hear footsteps approaching; doubtless it is Blanche herself."

The door of the parlour was thrown open by a servant, and the Lady Blanche walked into the apartment with a stately air, and seated herself on a sofa a little distance from Major Harcourt.

In the eyes of the young officer, never had she appeared so lovely as upon that occasion. Her dark hair fell in rich luxuriance over her white and sloping shoulders, while the throat, pure as the sculptor's marble, was devoid of ornament, save a plain black velvet ribbon, which contrasted most strikingly with the snowy purity of the soft, warm flesh. Her attire was plain and simple, but rich in material; and in every appointment, the most exquisite taste prevailed, and challenged admiration.

For some moments the father and the major sat gazing upon the sweet girl in silent homage—the homage which chivalrous man should ever pay to beauty; but the silence was at length broken by Sir Reginald.

"This gentleman," said he, bowing to Harcourt, "has done you the high honour to propose for your hand."

"I'm very sorry, my father," replied Blanche, in a dignified tone; "because it will be utterly out of my power to grant him any encouragement to his suit."

"How so?" demanded the major.

"It is entirely unnecessary, sir, to enter into explanations in regard to the matter. Let it suffice for you to know that existing circumstances, as well as my own inclination, prevent me from accepting the honour you would confer on me."

"Obstinate girl!" cried the old baronet, in a rage, "I know the reason of your conduct; but rest assured that you will find cause to regret having opposed the wishes of your parent!"

"Yes, and I, too, know the reason!" broke in the major, in a fierce tone; "I, too, know the reason. She is in love with that young Bob Tracy, the son of a retired baker or butcher, or soap boiler, or some other such calling. He is, moreover, an enemy to the ministry; and if I don't get him a berth where he will have the benefit of the sea air for a few years, I will give you leave to shoot me."

The cheeks of Blanche reddened at this harangue, whether with indignation or from some other emotion we shall leave our readers to decide; but without deigning any answer to the impudent Harcourt, with flashing eyes and heaving bosom, she rose to her feet, and in stately majesty swept out of the apartment.

"That girl puzzles me," said Sir Reginald, as the door closed behind her.

"By heavens! she's a houri, a perfect Juno—she must and shall be mine!" cried Harcourt, in an impassioned tone; and then, after a hurried consultation, in a very low tone, with the baronet, he rose and took his departure from the hall, with a sternness upon his countenance that boded no good to some person.

That evening Blanche and Robert Tracy had a long interview at a place previously appointed, and the maiden made him aware of the danger which menaced him.

But it was now too late to retract; so he determined to go forward in his enterprise, and expressed his desire to embark on the morrow in a vessel bound to New York, and, once there, he would offer himself as a volunteer in the ranks.

"Not so fast—not so fast, my good friend," said a voice; and the next instant a dark lantern was sprung, and threw its rays upon the spot, disclosing Blanche seated by the side of our hero, whose arm encircled her slender waist, while her beautiful eyes looked up with confidence and love into his manly face.

The same light disclosed to Robert Tracy the swarthy forms of some twenty armed men, comprising the "press-gang" of the town, headed by Major

Harcourt, Sir Reginald, and a lieutenant in the royal navy.

"Seize upon him, my lads—seize upon him!" shouted the baronet, in a voice hoarse with passion; "he has been proclaimed as an incendiary and an outlaw by his most gracious Majesty's command, and a price is set upon his head. But I do not wish to take the life of any human being. I had much rather he should be taken on board a ship-of-war, and made to serve our blessed king. Off with him, my lads!"

Tracy struggled to escape, but it was all in vain. Overpowered by numbers, he was quickly thrown to the earth, and securely bound with cords, thrust into a cart, and hurried to the beach, where a boat was ready manned to convey him and his captors on board a frigate lying in the stream, with her sails all loose, and her anchor a-peak, ready to proceed to her station in the West Indies.

No sooner was our hero on board, than the frigate, like some great sea-bird, instinct with life, spread her white wings and soared away; and ere the morning light dappled the blue waters of the English Channel, she was but a small check on the verge of the western horizon.

In the meantime, Sir Reginald Woodville, with a stern countenance and bitter words, had taken his daughter by the arm, and with a rudeness which but ill accorded with his chivalrous pretensions, he led or rather dragged the gentle and sorrowing girl away toward her home, and thrusting her into her chamber, locked her in, and departed.

It was a dark cloudy night in June, and the red sun had gone down like some angry warrior in the swelling waters of the vast Atlantic.

One bark alone was to be seen upon that trembling wilderness of waves, and silently as some sheset spectre did she glide along her way.

Upon the quarter-deck of that lonely barge, thus speeding quietly onward, were walking a stout, ruddy gentleman of some forty years' experience of the dark shadows of a toilsome life, and a fair young girl, sweet as the early violets that lift their smiling heads the first of all their lovely sisterhood. That hale old gentleman and that young girl were the captain of the barge and the heroine of our tale, *Blanche Woodville*. But what does she there, upon the quarter-deck of that silent vessel, far off upon the lonely sea? Let us listen for a moment to the conversation that is going on between her and her companion, and perhaps we may solve the problem.

"Well, Miss *Blanche*," said the captain, coming to a pause in his walk, and gazing for a few moments at a huge mass of clouds that had gathered in the eastern horizon, "I suppose you do not regret being so near your journey's end?"

"No; I am very anxious once more to set my feet upon the firm earth; and besides, you know that I have other reasons for wishing to arrive as soon as possible at our port of destination."

"Yes; you showed great bravery in thus lowering yourself by a cord from the window of the room in which your father had confined you for a whole year, and then coming down to Portsmouth and engaging a passage in this vessel, with the hope of finding young Tracy. Great bravery, indeed! But do you not expect to have a deal of trouble in finding out his whereabouts?"

"Doubtless I shall; but I trust to good fortune, which has thus far befriended me, and to which I am duly thankful."

"Well, I suppose you are right, Miss *Blanche*. But hadn't you better go below? The wind begins to snuff a little, with a monstrous heavy appearance, from the eastward. I shouldn't wonder if we got a sneezer before morning. These summer gales, when they do come, are not to be trifled with. I wouldn't care so much if I was certain of my latitude. I didn't get a good observation to day at noon; but I'm afraid were a little to the southward of my reckoning."

"Oh, Captain! I hope there's no danger!"

"I think not, miss; but you'd better go below. We shall have work soon, I suspect; and women, you know, are only in the way at such times."

Blanche Woodville took the hint, and retreated to the cabin; and soon, as the skipper had predicted, the rain fell in torrents, the wind howled and shrieked among the tattered rigging, the lightning flashed, the thunder belowed in its iron halls above, and the wild surges leaped and rolled in mountainous ridges, black and gloomy as the depths of *Acheron*.

The vessel had timely been put under snug canvas, by furling everything except the foresail; under which, with the wind and waves howling astern, she fled like an affrighted thing along the tortured sea.

She had run in this way for some ten hours, and the grey dawn was beginning to appear in the eastern horizon, when the appalling cry of "Breakers! breakers! breakers! right ahead!" caused every one on board to thrill with horror.

"Put the helm hard up! Stand by to wear ship!" shouted the captain, in a hoarse voice, which was, however, almost drowned by the shrieks of the tempest. "Man the starboard braces, men, and stand by to brace up the yards as the ship comes to the wind! Cheerily, man—cheerily! you are working for your lives now!"

Too late! too late!—all too late!

As the struggling vessel came slowly to the wind on the other tack, she was boarded by a tremendous comber of a swell, which swept every human being from her deck, and threw her on her beam-ends. In this terrible position, with all her crew struggling in the waves, which quickly strangled and overwhelmed them, the fated vessel was driven madly onward, and quickly struck upon what the sailors call a sunken reef of rocks upon the coast of Florida. It was, in fact, none other than the dangerous *Carysfort Reef*, long the dread of seamen, and considered as one of the worst spots on the whole coast. The captain of the bark had made a great mistake in his reckoning—a mistake which had cost him his life, and the loss of his vessel and crew.

When the vessel struck the reef, she was quickly dashed in pieces by the surges. To one of the fragments of that shattered wreck, which was thrown upon the beach, clung the insensible form of *Blanche Woodville*, the only one who escaped destruction. The next morning, the sun had risen from the world of tossing waters, and his beams penetrated into the cave described in our opening chapter.

By the side of a rude couch on which our rescued heroine was reposing, sat the stranger first introduced to the reader.

Blanche awoke, and as she gazed fondly into the face of her companion, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Robert! how strange—how very strange all this seems. It is more like a dream than a reality."

"Strange we should both have been shipwrecked upon the same reef, and that we should have been the only survivors of the fated crew."

Little more now remains to be said. After remaining for some time at the cavern until *Blanche* was fully restored, the loving couple set up along the sea coast, and after much suffering and privation, succeeded in reaching the city of Savannah, then invested by the British troops. Securing a lodging for *Blanche*, young Tracy joined the American standard and fought bravely in the corps of the famed *Pulaski*.

Shortly after the war, our hero was wedded to the lovely *Blanche*. He settled down as a planter, in peace and happiness, on the banks of the *Darien*, and his descendants still reside near the spot, and often speak of the *Double Shipwreck* and the *Outlaw's Cave*.
L. E. C. H.

CRYSTAL PALACE IN HOLLAND.—A Crystal Palace has been opened at Amsterdam with great solemnity, and in the presence of inhabitants from all parts of Holland. The model of Sir Joseph Paxton's structure of 1851 has been adopted with much success, and the structure offers a remarkable contrast to most of the public and private buildings in the capital. The project was started as long ago as 1853, but in consequence of all kinds of hindrances being offered, the building was not commenced till 1858, and since then many circumstances have combined to prevent its completion; but the projector, Dr. Sarpathi, has at last experienced the satisfaction of seeing the building finished and opened with an exhibition of art and industry. The patron of the undertaking, Prince Frederick, uncle of the King, presided at the ceremony, and replied in a most gratifying manner to an address from Dr. Sarpathi, whom the Prince decorated with the Order of the Lion of the Netherlands.

DEATH OF A WATERLOO VETERAN.—Mr. Russell, late of the Clyde Trust, died lately, at Rutherglen, at the advanced age of 82. Mr. Russell was a native of Shettleston. He spent his boyhood as a herd, in the neighbourhood of Lanark, and was afterwards apprenticed as a mason in Glasgow. He used often to point with pride to some of the buildings in Tron-gate, in whose erection he had assisted. He soon became disgusted with his trade, and especially with the tyranny of his foreman, and in 1798 enlisted in the Royal North British Dragoons, or Scots Greys. When the regiment was sent on active service, in 1815, he was troop sergeant-major. With this rank he fought at Waterloo, where he himself escaped unscathed; although, to quote a letter of his own, his "horse was sorely wounded," and he "lost his entire kit, together with his bible, which he missed more than all the rest." Some years after the declaration of peace, wishing to educate his family for civil pursuits, he obtained his discharge. In the same year, 1821, he became steam-boat harbour-master at the Dromedary, at a time when the miles of quay wall which now line the banks of our Clyde were represented by a few hundred yards of wooden wharf, and our shipping trade was in its mere beginnings. He looked back

upon this part of his life with more pride and pleasure than upon any other. He leaves a family of three sons, the eldest for eighteen years a missionary in East India, but now retired from his labours; the youngest, professor of law in University College, London, and a distinguished member of the English bar; the second, at the head of the literary department of one of the leading newspapers of Australia.

BANTING ON CORPULENCE

As there are many persons whose health and appearance would be materially improved by putting on a little more of that garb of flesh which has proved such an intolerable burden to Mr. Banting, we confidently recommend to their study the treatise of M. Savarin, wherein the means of attaining a becoming degree of plumpitude are elaborately explained. *Leanness*, says this wise philosopher, though it may be no absolute disadvantage to a man, "is a great disaster for ladies; for beauty is their life, and beauty consists chiefly in the rounded limb and graceful curve. The most recherché toilet, the best dressmakers in the world, cannot supply certain absences, or hide certain angles. But a woman who is born thin may be fattened like a chicken."

No wonder that Mr. Banting, having a natural tendency towards corpulence, found himself, in his sixty-third year, much fatter than was at all convenient. He has, with amiable candour, given us a sketch of his former dietary, and after porusing it, we cannot wonder at the result. Buttered toast, beer, and pastry were his favourite articles of consumption; and, moreover, he was in the habit of taking four meals a day, which is greatly too much for a man of sedentary habits and occupation. We are strongly inclined to think that if Mr. Banting had somewhat restrained his appetite, practised occasional fastings, and entirely abstained from heavy wet, buttered crumpets, muffins, and *pâtisseries*, he would have fully attained his object, without discontinuing the use of bread, sugar, or potatoes.

Men have been known materially to reduce their weight, and at the same time to gain additional health and strength, by restricting themselves entirely to the use of the simplest farinaceous food. Such is the case of Wood, the miller of Billerica in Essex, stated in the *Transactions of the London College of Physicians*. This man, it would appear, had attained to such a degree of corpulency by the free use of fish meat and ale, that his life had become a burden to him, but he succeeded in reducing himself to a moderate bulk by the following means:—His reformed diet consisted of a simple pudding, made by boiling castor flour in water, without salt. Of this he consumed about three pounds in twenty-four hours, and took to fluid whatever, not even water. On this he lived in perfect health for many years, went through a great deal of exercise in the open air, and was able to carry five hundred pounds weight, "which," says our authority, "was more than he could lift in his youth, when he lived on animal food, and drank freely of ale."

In fact, the man fed upon porridge, from time immemorial the favourite diet of the Scottish peasantry, among whom obesity is unknown. Pure farinaceous food can never be hurtful. On the contrary, as Mr. Banting may learn from a perusal of the first chapter of the *Book of Daniel*, it is infinitely more wholesome both for mind and body than a dietary of butcher's meat and wine. But buttered toast, pastry, and beer are proper materials for the formation of a *Lambert*; and so long as Mr. Banting indulged freely in these luxuries, which we object not to his stigmatizing as "beans," he was necessarily compelled periodically to enlarge the limits of his girdle.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

A St. Petersburg letter says:—"It would be a mistake to suppose that the marriage of the Grand Duke Nicholas has been determined on by political considerations. The young prince chose the Princess Dagmar of Denmark because he preferred her to any other—because, of all the princesses proposed to him, she pleased him most. From their first interview, the prince and princess were attracted to each other by a mutual sympathy, which a further acquaintance only confirmed. Moreover, this is in strict conformity with the usages and traditions of the Imperial Court of Russia. When Alexander II., twenty-three years since, married the Princess Mary of Hesse-Darmstadt, it was because that princess, equally distinguished by the charms of her person and the graces of her mind, pleased him more than any other. The young couple loved each other, and engaged to marry even before their parents were informed of their mutual affection. The Emperors of Russia allow the princes and princesses of their house to marry as they please. They do not regard marriages as affairs of public interest, but as family concerns, in which diplomacy has no right to interfere."



[WILLIS LINTON'S INTERVIEW WITH THE MONEY-LENDER.]

MEZAR THE MISER.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE THE STORM.

Tis false! I love her, as a true man should,
Not to dishonour; yet it must be thus—
My father bids me.

Cressis: A Tragedy.

Hast thou, then, heard?

Yes! by thy sneer—the story hath gone forth.

Ibid.

A cosy group were clustered in and around the porch of the old brown farm-house on the river's bank—called the River Farm by the neighbours. This group consisted of Farmer Pinkerton, his wife Gertrude, and his brother Mezard. The latter was quite an old man, with a bent form, wrinkled visage, and thin locks of gray. He was much older than the farmer.

There were two other figures who joined the party in the porch occasionally, as the occupations they were pursuing permitted them to exchange a word or two.

One, a slouching, awkward, stout fellow—the farmer's hired man—a blunt, honest fellow, who would have his say, with all the independence peculiar to his race.

The other, a demure and staid little woman—we cannot call her girl, though she was but a girl in face and figure—for upon her fine obiselled features was expressed a stamp of wisdom, gained by long suffering, perhaps, and premature experience of the world, which gave her a look of womanhood in strange incongruity with her youthful face and form.

The story of Orpha Angevine,—for such was the name of the girl who lived with Farmer Pinkerton as maid of all-work—was well-known in Fallowfield. She had been quite wealthy once, when her father was looked upon as the richest man in the village, but evil times came upon her. It was a strange story, the truth of which was never rightly known, and Orpha herself could not explain it, for she was but a child at the time, scarcely ten years of age. Her father, David Angevine, became involved in some manner, by injudicious endorsement of his friends' notes, it was said, and went to London to endeavour to settle his affairs, taking his wife along with him. He never returned—in fact, was never heard of more.

The whole affair was one of those mysteries which we sometimes encounter, and which baffle us even in the broad, open daylight. Scandal was busy, as usual, with the absent. His wife was said to have eloped with a foreigner, and Angevine had smiled in pursuit of them.

To cap the climax, the handsome house he had occupied in Fallowfield took fire one night and burned to the ground.

Many thought this was the work of an incendiary; be that as it may, the perpetrator was never discovered.

Among Angevine's papers saved from the flames was one addressed to his daughter Orpha. It was opened, and discovered to be a certificate of deposit for ten thousand pounds, signed by Lathrop Moneyment, a London stockbroker.

Orpha went to London, child as she was, in search of this broker. She could find no trace of any such man. She found a relative in the city, and took up her residence with her, in the hope that one day she should find this Lathrop Moneyment, and recover the money in his hands.

Eight years passed away, and that hope proved futile, and one day, when the village of Fallowfield had almost forgotten that there was such a person in existence as Orpha Angevine, she appeared again in her native place—poor, friendless, and with a look upon her pale, thin features of utter despondency and lost hope.

She found a home beneath the roof of good Farmer Pinkerton, and soon became a favourite with the household, with two exceptions. Mezard Pinkerton, the old miser, who did not scruple to make his home with his good, easy brother, and paid his board in grumbling, regarded her suspiciously, and seemed to begrudge her the food which she so fairly earned; and Calvin Stylin, the farm labourer, was not her friend.

We need not enlarge upon his dislike—the cause of his enmity will soon appear.

These unfriendly ones, however, did not trouble Orpha. Perhaps she was not aware of their dislike. Some deep and brooding sorrow may have so absorbed her thoughts as to render her unconscious of petty annoyances.

She lived a tranquil if not a cheerful life, intent upon her occupations, with an entire abnegation of self, and a kind word for all with whom she came in contact.

So the petite but exquisitely moulded form rounded out again into its just proportions; the colour came back into the pale cheeks, the black eyes glistened, and smiles again displayed the white teeth, and the dark masses of brown hair were brushed back in wavy bands from the broad forehead, and the step grew light and airy, until the village girls confessed that Orpha was a "beauty," and bore the palm in Fallowfield. But never was beauty so unconscious of

its charms; and many a would-be flatterer was mortified at the cold reception of his well-studied compliments, and the village beaux tried their fascinations in vain upon the cold heart of Orpha Angevine.

All this time we have forgotten the group at the farm porch. Old Mezard took the old black pipe from his mouth and glanced anxiously at the heavens. Night was coming on, not with the golden and purple hues of the declining sun, but with grey, leaden-coloured clouds, which overcast the sky with a sombre pall. The twilight was pale and sickly. The breeze sighed mournfully amongst the trees that fringed the river's banks, whilst the river itself, swollen to an unusual height by the spring rains and melting snow, swept sullenly on, a muddy, turbid stream.

"More rain to-night," said Mezard, shaking his head with oracular precision. "If this continues, we shall have a flood, and the greatest one known in the valley."

"More'n likely," returned Father Pinkerton, sentimentally.

"Any danger of the farm?" asked Mezard.

"I think not. I've been building a dyke for the last week, just to guard against this very thing, though you did tell me that I was a fool to spend the money on my farm, and that I had better put it out at interest. I remember there happened here, not so many years ago, the two greatest floods ever known in the valley; and who knows but there may come another, worse than either of the other two? So I built a dyke to save my farm."

"Very sensible," said Mezard, nodding his head, approvingly, and drawing away vigorously at his pipe. "You know the old wind-mill a mile below here?"

"Yes—why do you ask?"

"There ain't been anything ground there for some time?"

"I should think not—in fifty years. Why it's only a ruin, and crazy besides; it isn't safe to venture in it. I've heard you go a great deal there, brother, and I've often wondered what could take you there."

"Fine view of the river," returned Mezard, nervously, and puffing out great clouds of smoke to hide his face,—"picturesque—very."

"I had no idea you were so romantic," laughed Jared Pinkerton. "I did not think you were in search of the picturesque, but of a treasure."

"Treasure! What treasure?" cried Mezard, aghast. "Do you think there is any treasure there?"

"Why not? Every old ruin is supposed to have its buried treasure."

"We never heard of any hidden treasure in these

parts," said Calvin Stylphin, joining in the conversation; "and if any one's got any treasure in the old windmill I advise him to look sharp after it, for if the river does rise, it will undermine the old mill structure, for you see it's on much lower ground than we are."

Mezar grew very pale, and his teeth chattered against the stem of his pipe. Orpha looked out of the door at these words.

"And Ashville is on much lower ground than this, is it not?" she asked, somewhat anxiously.

"To be sure it is," answered Pinkerton. "If the river rises ten feet here, Ashville will be under water. Heaven pity the poor souls that live there, say I."

Orpha seemed strangely agitated.

"I must go there after tea, then," she murmured. "Mother Hibbert is old and infirm, and she might perish."

"She—who?" asked Mrs. Pinkerton, who had indistinctly caught the words.

"A friend of mine," answered Orpha, hurriedly, and with embarrassment, "who lives at Ashville, and whom I must warn of the coming danger."

"Well, well," returned the dame, good-naturedly; "put the tea to drawing, set the table for supper, and then you can go."

Orpha disappeared with a look that was expressive of the deepest gratitude—in fact, too deep for so slight a favour.

"Why should the girl be so anxious to go to Ashville?" asked Pinkerton, more in communion with his own thoughts than addressing the question to any one in particular. "There are plenty of boats there, and somebody'll look after Mother Hibbert."

"I think I know why Orpha is so anxious to go to Ashville," said Calvin Stylphin, with a cunning leer.

Pinkerton looked at him earnestly a moment, and then shook his head, gravely.

"You are a toad, Calvin!" he returned, with emphasis, "for you have never a good word for your neighbour. I know you are honest, go to church regular every Sunday, and wrong no one, but you have a waspish disposition for all that, and your tongue is your sting. But don't you say anything against Orpha—I can see it on your tongue's end—for she is a good girl, and her character is above reproach. If you have heard any idle gossip against a poor orphan girl who has nothing in the world but her good name, don't repeat it here, Calvin—don't repeat it here."

"Oh, immaculate, no doubt!" sneered old Mezar. "Strange faith you have in her. What was she doing in London all the time she was away?"

"That is neither your business nor mine, brother," returned Pinkerton, laconically.

"I don't know what she was doing in London," pursued Calvin, nothing daunted by the farmer's reproach, but doggedly pursuing the subject with the obstinacy of his sluggish, ignorant nature; "but I do know what takes her so often to Ashville; and as she is an honest, good girl, as you say, she surely ought not to make a secret of it."

"Drat you!" exclaimed Pinkerton, testily. "What mare's nest have you discovered now?"

"It's not a mare's nest exactly," replied Calvin, with a grin, "though it is very much like one. I fancy you will be surprised when you hear what takes Orpha so often to visit old Mother Hibbert."

"Speak out, man!" cried Mrs. Pinkerton, whose female curiosity began to get aroused—"speak out, and don't beat about the bush so. Tell us what takes Orpha to Ashville."

"Well, then," returned Calvin, "Orpha goes to Ashville to see a baby!"

"A baby!" echoed his listeners, in astonishment.

"A baby!" affirmed Calvin, triumphantly. "A little girl, about two years old."

"Whose is it?" questioned Mrs. Pinkerton.

"Whose should it be but Orpha's?" returned Calvin, rather scornfully.

It passed for bluntness with some people, though others thought it impudence—the impudence of ignorance.

"Then Orpha must have been married," cried the good dame, lifting her eyebrows with the air of one who has made a discovery.

"Ay, ay!" chuckled old Mezar, who seemed to take a strange interest in the defamation of Orpha's character.

"Calvin," began Pinkerton, sternly and seriously, "this is no jesting matter. Tell us what you know about this child at Ashville, and what reason you have to suppose that it belongs to Orpha."

"A few words will do that," answered Calvin. "I knew that Orpha was in the habit of making frequent visits to Ashville, and being naturally of an inquiring disposition, I became a little anxious to know what took her there so often. So, being down there one day, I just cast about to see if I could find out—and I did. She goes to see old Mother Hibbert, who has got a little girl of some two years old living with her,

which she has taken to bring up. I called in and had a little chat with the old woman, and I found out, quite accidentally like, that she took the child to bring up just about the time that Orpha came back to Fallowfield."

"But that is no proof that the child belongs to Orpha," said Pinkerton.

"Maybe not," responded Calvin; "but why does she go so often to see it? Why is she so fond of it? And why is she so dreadful scary now when she thinks there's danger down there?"

"The natural instinct of the mother for its young," added Mezar, nodding his head sagely.

"I don't like this affair at all," said Pinkerton, after mature deliberation; "and I shall question Orpha about it. I have no doubt she can explain the matter; but I dislike the concealment—far where there is concealment, there is generally something wrong. At all events, the affair will soon be over the village now Calvin has got hold of it, and must be explained if Orpha is to remain beneath our roof—and I see no cause yet to send her away; do you, mother?"

"No, indeed, Jared," responded his wife, with energy.

"You speak to her, mother—you are the proper person."

So the subject was dropped for that time.

"Why, I declare, here comes young Mr. Linton down the road," exclaimed Mrs. Pinkerton. "I thought he was in London. What should bring him here?"

Old Mezar started at the words, and glanced uneasily down the road, where a young man of elegant appearance and fashionable attire was carelessly approaching the house, swinging a little cane in his hand. He bowed with gentlemanly ease as he drew near, and was warmly greeted by the inmates of the farm, for he was well-known to them, and notwithstanding his metropolitan reputation for fastness, Willis Linton was a general favourite in the village of Fallowfield. His father was an officer—a colonel—in the army, and was on foreign service. He owned considerable property in Fallowfield, was a widower, and with but one child, Willis. During his father's absence, Willis had been studying law in London.

He was a handsome young fellow, rather tall, with a graceful, sinewy figure, and upright, military carriage. Black hair, worn quite short, a hazel eye, long, straight nose, a crisp moustache shading well-cut lips, marked by just the slightest touch of indecision, and a double chin. A pleasant smile was the general expression worn by his features, as if he possessed a superabundant fund of good nature which would bubble to the surface.

He stood there by the porch, switching his polished boots with his little cane, answering the questions which were poured in upon him from all quarters, unconcernedly; but every little while he would glance furtively at old Mezar, as if he had something of moment to speak with him about, and old Mezar smoked his pipe the while, watching the young man from under his grey eyebrows as a cat watches a mouse-hole.

"When did you arrive in the village?" asked Mrs. Pinkerton. "You're quite a stranger."

"Then, as a stranger, give me welcome," answered Willis, gaily; "I arrived last evening."

"How long do you propose remaining here?" interrogated Pinkerton.

"Not long," responded Willis, looking at Mezar, "if I can transact the business which brought me here as speedily as I hope; and in order to accomplish that, I have come to have a little chat with your brother, Mr. Mezar Pinkerton, as his advice may be of service to me in the affair I have in hand."

"With me?" asked Mezar, lifting his eyebrows with a well-dissembled sort of astonishment.

"With you," returned Willis, with a smile that curled his lips into what a close observer would have detected as a scornful expression, "if your friends will give me leave."

"O, certainly," said Pinkerton, and he and the dame went into the house, while Calvin walked towards the barn, whistling softly to himself.

"Well," said Mezar, snappishly, as Willis drew a chair beside him in the porch, and seated himself.

Willis cast a cautious look around, and then spoke. "You know why I am here?" began Willis, anxiously, a cloud of care overcasting the usual sunshine of his face.

"No—how should I?"

The young man's lips curled again.

"Why this evasion?" he said. "Your secret is safe enough with me. I am too deeply in your debt—too much in your power to betray you, even if I had the inclination. You have in your possession acceptances of mine and my father's to the amount of five thousand pounds."

"I—I!" ejaculated Mezar, aghast. "For heaven's sake, young man, would you have me murdered in my bed?"

"Not I," answered Willis, laughing at the old man's abject fright, in spite of the anxiety that preyed upon his mind. "I have no idea of proclaiming your trade to your neighbours, who are doubtless as ignorant of it as I was myself until a day or two ago."

"Trade—what trade?" growled Mezar.

"That of usurer!" returned the young man, deliberately. "A business which you transact through your agent,—whom I took to be a principal—Mr. Lathrop Moneyment, of London. The acceptances of my father and self, which I placed in his hands for moneys received, are now due. I cannot meet them; and upon soliciting an extension of time, he tells me he is but an agent, you the principal, and that the acceptances are in your hands; consequently, I come to you with the same request I made to him—an extension of time."

"No; the money must be paid."

"Impossible! I cannot raise the money. Five thousand pounds is not a sum to be collected in a week."

"Five thousand?—ten thousand, including interest."

"Ten thousand!" exclaimed Willis, in utter astonishment. "Good heavens! this is entry with a vengeance. Ten thousand pounds! You are dreaming, old man."

"Perhaps I am," returned Mezar, with a chuckle; "but it is a wide-awake dreaming, as you will soon discover. I have in my room here at the farm, your and your father's acceptances to that amount; and if they are not paid—"

"Paid!" echoed Willis, indignantly. "Do you think I will submit to such a robbery?"

"Harsh words, young man. Be more temperate. You will pay it—that is, your father will. A word in your ear. I'll tell you why you'll pay it. The acceptances in your father's name are forgeries! The colonel is a proud man, and would not like to have his only son sent to a prison, to the eternal disgrace of his family."

Willis Linton turned ghastly white, and it seemed for a moment as if he would fall from his chair. The anguish depicted upon his face was pitiable to behold.

"It would kill my father," he murmured, "should it reach his ears. His proud and sensitive nature would never survive the shock. This secret must be preserved at all hazards. How much time will you give me?"

"Come and see me to-morrow, and I will tell you."

Just then Mrs. Pinkerton came to the door, to call her brother to supper, also inviting Willis to stop and take supper with them, but he politely declined her invitation.

"Have you had that bolt fixed yet?" asked Mezar of his sister-in-law, as if struck by a sudden remembrance.

"Not yet," she answered, carelessly, as if the affair was of little moment in her mind.

"What negligence," snarled Mezar. "Supposing any one was to break into the house, there's nothing to keep them out of my chamber, and I might be robbed!"

"Of your flannel night-cap, eh?" laughed Mrs. Pinkerton, as she entered the room, followed by the grumbling Mezar.

Willis Linton walked slowly down the road.

"How shall I ever pay this money?" he thought.

"God help me! I am utterly lost and ruined, beyond hope."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT ORPHA DID IN LONDON.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire—
The birds in vain their amorous decant join
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire;
These ears, alas! for other notes repine—
A different object do these eyes require—
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
And in my breast 'tis imperfect joys expire.

AFTER tea, Mrs. Pinkerton asked Orpha up into her bed-chamber, to have a little talk with her concerning the story which Calvin Stylphin had brought from Ashville, and which she knew would soon be scattered broadcast over Fallowfield.

"You wished to visit Ashville after tea, did you not?" she began.

"Such was my desire," replied Orpha. "Have you any message that you wish me to deliver there?"

"No," returned the dame. "What takes you to Ashville so often, Orpha?"

Simple as the question was, it seemed to perplex the girl strangely. The colour surged into her cheeks, and she averted her eyes from the earnest gaze of the other.

"What?" she said, after an awkward pause.

"Yes—what takes you there?"

"Oh, I go to see Mother Hibbert?"

"Why do you go to see Mother Hibbert?"

"Why?" she echoed again, her embarrassment increasing.

"Yes—why?"

"Because—"

A dead pause.

"Because what?" No answer from the girl, who now trembled perceptibly, and kept her eyes still averted. "Orpha," continued the farmer's wife, sadly, "I have heard a strange story about you; and I am sorry to say, your behaviour now convinces me there is more truth in it than I believed at first."

"What have you heard?" demanded Orpha, hoarsely.

"Calvin Styphlin says—"

"Oh, the story comes from him, does it?" interrupted Orpha, as her pretty lip curled scornfully. "I might have guessed as much."

"Calvin is an honest man," said Mrs. Pinkerton, as she observed Orpha's look, "and would scorn to speak an untruth."

"Calvin's character is not unknown to me; I have had opportunities and time to discover his disposition," returned Orpha, in a tone that completely puzzled the good woman, as she could not tell whether it was complimentary to Calvin or not. "But what is this strange intelligence that honest Calvin has brought from Ashville?"

"Well, they do say there that Mother Hibbert has taken an infant to bring up—a little girl two or three years old—and that she took it just about the time that you came back to Fallowfield, and, putting that circumstance and your visits together, they do say that the child is yours."

Mrs. Pinkerton felt relieved after this speech, though she looked at Orpha with an anxious expression. Much to her astonishment, the girl calmly met her gaze, and said, quietly:

"For once, gossip is right. The child is mine."

"Yours, Orpha?"

"Mine!"

The old lady's astonishment was unbounded at this calm assertion, for she had constructed an ingenious little romance in her own mind.

The child would turn out to be some poor orphan whom Orpha had generously adopted—the child of some friend whose passage to the grave had been cheered by the assurance that in Orpha her darling would find a second mother. Consequently, this open acknowledgment on the part of Orpha completely bewildered her.

"What! yours, Orpha?" she asked again, incredulously, "your own flesh and blood."

"My own," responded Orpha, with a sad smile.

"Then you must have been married?"

"I have been married."

"Orpha, Orpha!" cried the good woman, sternly, "do not attempt to impose upon me. You have no proof that you have ever been married."

"None—therefore I hoped to conceal the existence of my child. Vain hope! In a city I might have done so; in this village, never!"

"No—never!" returned Mrs. Pinkerton, with an emphatic shake of the head. "The morals of our village are somewhat purer than those of the great towns."

"I do not know."

"Is your husband alive or dead?"

"I cannot tell."

"Don't know whether he is alive or dead? Did he desert you?"

"Circumstances would seem to indicate so," returned Orpha, sadly; "but my heart, conscious of his love, says no."

Mrs. Pinkerton was deep in thought. She had great faith in Orpha; but the case seemed a little strange, not to say suspicious.

"Of course you have preserved your marriage certificate."

"It was never in my possession. He—my husband—kept it himself, and such an affair cannot be long concealed."

"Orpha, tell me the truth in this matter, for really it is the strangest affair. If you have been deceived by some villain, if you have never been married, say so at once, and Pinkerton and I will never think the worse of you, but still give you a home beneath our roof."

Tears stood in Orpha's eyes at this proof of the good woman's generous heart.

"I would not deceive you for the world," she answered, "even were it to my interest to do so. From infancy I was taught to venerate the truth, and I have never swerved from its path. Believe me, I have done nothing to bring disgrace upon the name I bear—a name as proud as any in Fallowfield, and once, in happy days long passed, as much honoured. I am the victim of strange circumstances which, I know, will make me look culpable before the world, and I must bear the odium they will cast upon me as best I may. Heaven and my conscience will give me strength to endure the trial. To you, my kind

benefactress and fast friend, I owe whatever explanation I can make. Hear my simple story, and then judge me as you will."

"As you say, Orpha," returned the good dame, drawing a long breath, "circumstances do appear to be very much against you; and if your story will make matters at all clearer, I should very much like to hear it."

"I left Fallowfield, as you know," began Orpha, "ten years ago, and went to London, at the request of a distant relative, to make my home with her, although I had another motive besides the mere acquisition of a home in accepting her invitation."

"The paper which had been saved from the flames, and which appeared to be of so much value, was in the name of a broker, who, doubtless, if I could find him, would pay the money. And still another motive urged me towards the great city—a lingering hope that I might there learn the fate or gain some tidings of my dear parents, whose sudden disappearance was wrapped in so much mystery. Swayed by these hopes, I gladly bade good-bye to my native village, where I no longer had a tie, and set out for the great metropolis."

"I was kindly received by my cousin, for such was the relationship in which she stood to me—Miss Serena Gymp, who kept a little millinery shop. I was at once requested to make myself at home—a request which it was not difficult to comply with in the society of Serena Gymp."

"She was a bustling, good-natured woman, with sandy-coloured eyes and hair, sharp, prominent nose, thin chin, a complexion naturally fair, but inclined to freckle, and a superabundance of animal spirits that kept her in good temper from morn till night. Though belonging to that forlorn class of the community designated as 'old maids'—for Serena had passed the shady side of thirty—her disposition had gained no acidity from that fact; but she pursued the even tenor of her way, and bore her single lot uncomplainingly, and with unflinching good temper."

"I was at once installed as an apprentice in the arts and mysteries of millinery, and she proceeded to teach me her trade."

"She found a ready pupil, for the novelty pleased me, and, by close application, I soon became very proficient, to her great delight."

"After a residence of three months, which had been applied to gaining what knowledge I could in my leisure moments, I took Miss Serena into my confidence, and showed her the certificate of deposit."

"She opened her little yellow eyes widely, in astonishment. It was an enormous sum to her. Great as it had appeared in my childish eyes, it appeared much larger to her."

"We must get it, Orpha," she eagerly exclaimed; "we must hunt up this Mr. Lathrop Moneyment, and make him pay it. Then I'll tell you what we'll do. You and I are alone in the world—two poor, friendless girls." Serena always spoke of herself as a girl, and gave herself, at times, certain childish airs which sat very ridiculously upon her, to carry out the illusion of two poor young orphans. "You and I are, my dear, the sole survivors of the proud family of the Angevines. It's true I'm only a distant relative—second cousin to you, dear, on the mother's side; but still I am a branch, although a little one, of the great family tree. Ah! she continued, pursing up her lips, and lifting her little tufts of eyebrows gently up and down, "when I think what the Angevines once were, and what they are now!"

"She sighed quite gently, and then went on, as if greatly relieved:

"Now, let us get the money, and restore the family to its station in society—the station it held during your poor father's lifetime, my dear."

"Are you sure he is dead, Miss Serena?" I asked, breaking the thread of her rambling discourse.

"Not the slightest doubt of it, child—not the slightest. He never would have absented himself all this time of his own free will. If he was alive, we should have heard from him before now. No, no—he's dead and gone!"

"And my mother?"

"How the word faltered on my trembling lips!

"Serena's cheerful countenance became suddenly overcast."

"She seemed unwilling to approach that part of the subject; but as I still pressed her, she answered, constrainedly:

"I don't know anything about your mother, child; and if what folks say about her is true, I don't want to know anything about her."

"Did she really run away from father?" I asked; for, child as I was, the dreadful story had reached my ears; and although at that time I could scarcely comprehend it, in all its fearful meaning, it had made a powerful impression upon my youthful mind, stunning me, as it were, with a vague sense of something horrible—an enormity of crime!"

"I think she did, child," returned Serena, and I

could see that the subject was very distasteful to her, and that her natural, true womanhood shrank from revealing the mother's sin to the daughter's eager ears, and my faith and confidence in her words grew greater from the fact. "There is scarcely any doubt but what she did. At all events, she received the attentions of one of those well-dressed villains whom society, to its eternal disgrace, tolerates, and who are ever on the alert to lure weak women from the paths of virtue and happiness to despair and guilt. She was suddenly missing. He disappeared at the same time. Search was instituted, and it was discovered that they had sailed together. Your father took passage in the next steamer, in pursuit of the guilty pair. The steamer was lost at sea, and nearly every soul perished, your father among the rest, for he was never heard of after."

"He must have perished," I said, more in communion with my own thoughts than in reply to her; "for, had he lived, he surely would have come to Fallowfield in search of me."

"To be sure he would," answered Serena.

"That puts me in mind of something," interrupted Mrs. Pinkerton, suddenly. "There was some one, nobody knew who, who came to the village a short time after your departure, and made very anxious inquiries about you, a rumour having been spread that you had been burned to death at the time of the fire; but as you had left no word what part of London you were going to, of course no one could tell."

"Did you see this man?" asked Orpha, eagerly.

"No; Pinkerton and I were from home at the time. The man saw and talked with Mezar, who gave him all the information he could. It was Mezar who told us of it on our return. The affair was soon forgotten."

"The clue is lost," said Orpha, sadly, "for the stranger could not find me in London unless he knew where to look for me. But the little circumstance revives my drooping hopes. I feel an inward conviction that my father yet lives, and some day heaven will bring us together."

"It may be so, Orpha; and heaven grant it may be soon, for I begin to think you need a father's care. But go on with your story; you have not come to the part I am the most anxious to hear."

"I will come to it at once. Serena and I spoke no more of my parents; but she unfolded to me her plan for restoring the fallen fortunes of my family. We were to obtain the money from the broker, and with it open a first class millinery establishment, which was sure to be patronized by the *élite* of fashion. Serena fairly revelled in dreams of the golden future, and I coincided and consented to all her views and schemes."

"The first thing to be done was to obtain the money. That was to be the stepping-stone to all that was to come in the bright future she had pictured. So we hunted up Mr. Lathrop Moneyment. We found his office without much difficulty—but, strange to say, we never found him."

"On our first visit, we were received by a beld, sleek-looking man, whose small eyes were completely hidden by a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. He was very polite to us, and spoke in soft, oily accents. I was but a child at the time, remember, and very susceptible to first impressions, which daguerrotypes themselves deeply upon my brain; so that now, after the lapse of so many years, I can recall the persons and scenes of the events I am narrating very distinctly."

"The name of this man whom we met in the office of Lathrop Moneyment, I never learned; and I have since thought that he took particular pains to keep it from us. He appeared pleased to see us, placed chairs for us, and when we asked for Mr. Moneyment, evaded our question and asked our business with him. Serena, almost as guileless as myself in the ways of the world, informed him; at his request, I submitted the certificate of deposit to his inspection. He had no doubt, he said, after examining the paper, that it was all correct. Mr. Moneyment had, however, dissolved his connection with the office, although his name was still retained, simply because it was too much trouble to have it altered. In fact, Mr. Moneyment had failed, and nobody knew what had become of him—not to mince the matter, Mr. Moneyment was deeply in debt, and was keeping out of the way, to avoid his creditors. Under these circumstances, he did not think the certificate would bring much in the market. He was extremely sorry to say so, for it grieved him to the heart to be obliged to distress ladies; but he really thought that our certificate was worth no more than a piece of blank paper."

"And so he politely bowed us out of the office, and we made the best of our way home, in a state of bewilderment, with the idea floating tangibly in our minds that Mr. Moneyment was a swindler, and our certificate of deposit of no earthly value."

"Serena was very much annoyed and discomforted at this untoward turn in the state of our affairs—"

much more so than myself. We took further counsel together, talked ourselves out of the dependency of our first failure, and resolved to find Mr. Moneyment, if possible, and hear what he would say about the matter. We called at the office the next day, and found our polite bald-headed friend at his post.

"He received us even more graciously than before, made all sorts of inquiries in regard to our occupation and residence; but gave us no satisfaction whatever concerning Mr. Moneyment. We retired in the same state of mind as before, and after talking over the affair for two or three days, mustered up courage to pay him another visit.

"This time he—the bald-headed, polite gentleman—completely extinguished every spark of hope that still remained within our bosoms. He informed us that, after diligent research and inquiry, undertaken solely on account of the extraordinary interest he took in our welfare, he had discovered that Mr. Moneyment sailed for America in the steamer that was lost, and had undoubtedly perished with the rest of the ill-fated passengers. There was no more to be said after this, and we left the office, thoroughly convinced that any further search for Mr. Moneyment was time and labour thrown away."

"Then you never found the broker, or obtained the money?" asked Mrs. Pinkerton.

"Never. I still have the certificate of deposit, worn and yellow with age. I keep it more as a memento of my lost father than from any benefit I ever hope to derive from it."

(To be continued.)

FIVE new peers will be entitled to take their seats in the House of Lords at the commencement of Parliament—viz, Lord Henry Vane, formerly M.P. for Hastings, who has succeeded to the dukedom of Cleveland; the Earl of Lincoln, who has succeeded to the dukedom of Newcastle; Viscount Boringdon, who has become Earl of Morley; Viscount Chelsea, who has succeeded to the earldom of Cadogan; and the Earl Jernyn, lately M.P. for West Suffolk, who has become Marquis of Bristol. Lord Rodney, whose father died on the 19th of August, will not be able to take his seat until 1878, when he will be of age.

EXHIBITION AT COPENHAGEN.—There has for some time been a strong desire that there should be a general exhibition of the manufactures and works of art of all the Scandinavian States, and that it should be held in Copenhagen, in the same way that exhibitions of the same kind, which were first held in London, have since taken place in Paris and elsewhere. A committee for carrying out the wishes that had been expressed on this subject was therefore some time ago appointed, of which His Royal Highness Prince Oscar was selected to be the president, and the report has just been published, in which it is proposed "That an exhibition of the products of the three Scandinavian States—Sweden, Norway, and Denmark—should take place in the summer of 1866, and that for that purpose a crystal palace should be constructed at the expense of the state and of the capital."

STORING EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS.—A very interesting operation, which attracted a great number of spectators, was performed recently at St. Ouen, near Paris. A large floating dock, on a new construction—210 ft. long, 36 ft. wide, and 18 ft. high—was launched on the canal. This great iron boat, or floating dock, is intended for a store, to hold all descriptions of spirits, oils, or other inflammable liquids. These substances, which are so frequently the cause of disastrous fires on land, are now to be secured on water, where they will be comparatively safe from fire. Each of the hundred compartments into which the iron boat is divided is sufficient to contain 250 hectolitres. Ten similar floating warehouses are to be built for the company of the docks of St. Ouen, of which five are already on the stocks. The iron boat was launched sideways into the canal of St. Ouen. After having glided along the slides placed under it, the iron mass, once in the water, moved forward more than forty yards by the force of impulsion. The operation was performed with complete success.

LORD MARK KERR is a very amiable nobleman, but he ought to recollect that there is a time to be silent as well as to speak, and that, although a slip of the tongue is pardonable enough on many occasions, still there are occasions when discretion becomes a virtue. Prince Alfred the other day gave the colours to the 13th, one of our historical regiments, and in giving, spoke in that kindly way, so full of good sense and right feeling, which goes home to the soldier's heart. It was an excellent speech, that of the Prince; but the Colonel's was beyond criticism. He absolutely complained that "Killiecrankie" was not inscribed on the banners which carried the mural crown and the memorable name of Jelladad. He complained, in fact, that an incident of civil war, certainly not inglorious to the Highlander, was not made record on colours under

which the Highlanders have to fight. At Killiecrankie fell one of the noblest men who ever fought for the unhappy Stuarts. Right or wrong, Lord Dundee did his duty in the way he understood it, and such devoted loyalty as his deserves honourable recognition. Prince Alfred has often worn the Stuart tartan, and no doubt a smile wrinkled his handsome face when Lord Mark made his speech.

AN UNFORTUNATE NAME.—At the beginning of the French Revolution, a marquis being about to quit Paris for a tour, was requested at the barriers to give his name. "I am Monsieur le Marquis de Saint Cyr." "Oh, oh! we have no monseurs now." "Put me down as the Marquis de Saint Cyr, then." "All titles of nobility are abolished." "Call me De Saint Cyr, only." "No person is allowed to have 'de' before his name in these days of equality." "Write Saint Cyr." "That won't do, either; all the saints are struck out of the calendar." "Then let my name be Cyr." "Sire (Cyr is thus pronounced)! that is worse than all; sires are all done away with." And thus was each glittering particle taken from his title, and the worthy marquis detained in Paris, from the want of a good, homespun, travelling name.

LOVE'S FIRST DREAM.

It comes when the heart is blithe and free
As waves that dance on the rippling sea;
It comes when the step is firm and light,
The cheek is fresh and the eye is bright—
And it weaves its spell till all would seem
To wear the fair hue of love's first dream.

The gentle maid feels its magic power,
As she dreams of love in twilight hour;
And fancy paints with more vivid ray
The cloudless joy of her future way;
And her eyes flash forth a brighter beam
At the visions sweet in love's first dream.

The youth just launched on the sea of life,
Feels a firmer strength to bear its strife,
When he thinks of one whose lovely face
First won his heart by its witching grace:
And he thinks no burden too great will seem—
He sees by the light of love's first dream.

And when the glad days of youth are spent,
The eye grows dim and the form is bent;
Then memory oft with a soothing power,
Will picture again some moonlit bower;
And no hour of life so sweet will seem,
As the one that passed in love's first dream.

S. E. D.

ROBERT STEPHENSON.

An anecdote is connected with the "Dun Cow" dinner. The subscription for the soup-tureen and stand was confined to the engineering officers of the company—a restriction which excluded several persons who were anxious to subscribe. Mr. Charles Capper, who, having merely subscribed a quantity of machinery to the line, could only be regarded as a sub-contractor, in vain endeavoured to force his contribution on the committee, who declined to accept it, because, if they set aside "the line" agreed upon, they should not know where to draw another. At the dinner, however, the enthusiastic sub-contractor was present in all his glory and admiration for Robert Stephenson. "Anyhow," he exclaimed, to some of the committee, as he entered the room, "you will allow me to dine with Mr. Stephenson." As the dinner was public, there was of course no opposition. In the dining-room the testimonial was placed on a buffet for inspection; and as the guests assembled, they surrounded the soup-tureen and criticised it. At length the sub-contractor, with a glow of triumph in his face, exclaimed: "It is a handsome tureen, but it wants a ladle." And as the critic spoke, he supplied the deficiency by taking from his pocket a large and very handsome ladle, and putting it into the silver vessel. The ladle formed part of the testimonial, and Robert Stephenson in his after life was very proud to tell his friends how he became possessed of his large soup-ladle.

But, with all his social success, Robert Stephenson's life had, in these latter years, much of sorrow. He had reached the period of life when men who have no children confess to themselves that the glory of their days is only a shadow. To those who enjoyed his inmost confidence he more than once revealed his sadness, and he was counselled to rouse himself against dependency.

His health was irreparably broken; but, to the last, he was so full of animation when in society that men found it difficult to imagine him other than he appeared. His hair had indeed turned white, without long warning; but it was remembered that George Stephenson had a snowy head while he was still in the prime of manhood.

There were also those who could tell how the

amiable and gentle-tempered man began to manifest a passing peevishness and irritability on trivial provocations. Those who knew him thoroughly saw in these and other symptoms the conclusive proofs of serious mischief, affecting health. But few suspected how he struggled against melancholy, and how he looked forward to death. The quiet of his house, when it was without guests, he could not endure. Often he walked about the lonely rooms, and sat down to yield to sorrow, which in the presence of others he courageously suppressed.

In these last days he used to look regretfully on the scenes of his early professional triumphs, and of his wedded joy in the little house in Greenfield Place, Newcastle. "The Robert Stephenson of Greenfield Place is the Robert Stephenson I am most proud to think of!" he once said to a lady.—"Life of Robert Stephenson, F.R.S." By J. E. Jeffrieson.

THE PRINCE OF THE ASTURIAS.—The Spanish Government has published a long report on the education of the Prince of the Asturias, eldest son of the Queen of Spain, a child of six. It is a regular essay, beginning with the power of Spain under Philip II., and ending with the praises of "your Majesty's exquisite tact." The ministry state that, in their opinion, the wars of the past have been only "trivial preludes to those which are expected still," and the education of the prince is therefore to be "chiefly military." He is to "become insensibly a great captain," and for that end is to "visit the troops, to descend to details, to understand principles, to learn the origin of military force, and the conditions of its organization." This paramount study is not, however, to interfere with that of "religion, which is the code of kings"—mark the implied exemption from human law—or of morals, or of the political law of the country. Well, it is something to see it conceded that a king ought to be educated. A hundred years ago wisdom came to the Bourbons by intuition. The world advances, though its progress cannot be said to be very fast when drill is made the first occupation of the heir to a throne.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER V.

And thou! what brings thee here? What joy I feel!
What raptures through my inmost bosom steal!
What is it thou wouldst at here? And what is this
That weighs upon my soul amid its bliss?
And sinks the heart that swelled in joy before?

Faust.

Help me, then! give thine aid to bring
The form of anguish to a quicker date!
Let what must come, come swiftly!—let her fate
Fall with his own—and with the self-same rush
Let them together to destruction sweep.

And

PEPITA was on the watch for the young count; she knew he would not leave his home for any considerable time without calling to bid her farewell, and her father had that morning assured her that it was already known at the castle that Count Vittorio was to resume his travels immediately.

Baldoni had gone to a neighbouring village on business, and Lettorio was engaged with her housekeeping duties; so the young people had the little parlour to themselves.

Pepita was most coquettishly and becomingly attired; and, although she had danced till a late hour on the previous night, the roses on her cheeks were not faded, nor the lustre of her eyes dimmed.

She held out both hands to her visitor—hands of wonderful beauty and symmetry, as she had remarked to her father—and Vittorio gallantly pressed them to his lips.

She earnestly said:

"It cannot be true that you are going away, Vito?" calling him by an abbreviation she had used in their childhood. "You will not surely leave us again so soon? It is but two months since you returned to the castle, and it seems incredible that your father is willing to part from you again."

"It is nevertheless true, Pepita," he sadly replied. "But perhaps it is my own fault that I am banished from my paternal home."

"Banished!" she repeated, with well-acted astonishment. "You use a strange word, count. How am I to understand it?"

"Literally, I assure you. My father sends me from him because I have taken the liberty of choosing my future partner in life without consulting him. Pepita, can I ask you to be our friend? You and I have been on the best terms from our childhood, and in this strait I come to ask sympathy and assistance from you. I am sure you will grant it."

In spite of her self-control, there was an eager flash of triumph in her black eyes; but it was instantly quenched, and she asked:

"In what can I aid you, Vito, or the happy one you have chosen? I have no influence with the marquis; then why ask assistance from me?"

"My father must know nothing of the service you will render me, Pepita. I must find means of hearing from my betrothed; of writing to her all that may happen to me in my absence. Only through you can this be accomplished; my letters can be transmitted through you, and here be sent in the same way. Will you brave the chances of my father's anger to do this for me, dear girl? If you will, I shall think you the best friend I have in the world."

Pepita seemed to shrink with alarm from this proposal. She shook her head dubiously, and slowly said:

"If my agency were discovered, it might lead to the dismissal of my father from his employment as steward of the estate. He would never forgive me; and although I have the will to serve you, if you look on the affair in its true light, you will see that I dare not venture on such a course as that."

"Pepita, you know that you dare do anything on which you have once set your mind. Your father might chide, but he would soon forgive you, for the marquis is not just to punish him for any act you may commit. Besides, there is little chance of discovery, if you act with your usual shrewdness. If you refuse, I shall know what value to set on the professions of friendship of which you have been so lavish."

She suffered tears to dim her beautiful eyes, and then, suffused, turned them upon him. In tremulous tones she said:

"Dear Vito, if I consulted my own heart, I should at once say that I am ready to do anything you command. But running counter to the wishes of the marquis must bring me into a very bad scrape if I should be found out."

"Why should you harp on that? Who is to betray you? and what has become of your natural independence and fearlessness, that they fail you at the first test? Excuse me for asking this kindness of you, since you are so unwilling to grant it. I can at least depend on you not to betray my confidence?"

"How can I do that, when you have not told me to whom the letters are to be sent? I am not so familiar with your affairs, count, as even to guess who is the lady of your thoughts."

"There is but one to whom they can be given, and I do not shrink from naming her to you. I love Lucia."

Pepita started with well-acted surprise.

"Lucia! Ah, that alters the case. Lucia is as dear to me as if we were sisters, and I will do anything to secure her happiness. My father also takes the deepest interest in her, and we have both felt much sympathy for her since the death of your mother left her so lonely. She does not understand how sincerely I am attached to her, or she would not treat me so coldly as she often does. If I can console her of my affection for her by mutually serving you, I withdraw my refusal. Yes; I will risk the anger of the marquis, and also of my father, to do a good turn for the sweet and lovely Lucia."

Enchanted at hearing the object of his passion thus spoken of, the count again kissed her fair hands, and uttered his thanks in a most animated manner.

Pepita laughed archly, and then said:

"So, you and the Rose of the Castle, as Lucia is poetically called, have lost no time in falling in love with each other. More romantic than prudent, I must confess; but she is fair enough to excuse any folly, and the marquis should have foreseen that it would be dangerous to keep you at the castle while she is there. Come, tell me all about the affair; for I dearly prize a good love story."

"There is no time to do that now," replied Vittorio, on whose fine senses something in the tone of her voice jarred. "I can only say that we are pledged to each other by the most solemn vows, and we—"

Pepita changed colour suddenly, and rapidly interrupted him:

"You have not ventured to set at naught the authority of your father by a clandestine marriage?"

"Oh, no! we have not gone that far; but it was because Lucia would not consent. I would have made her mine, at all hazards; but she refused to incur my father's displeasure against me, should he discover what we had done. I love her all the more for her high principle, Pepita, and I will arrange my affairs so that I can return and claim her plighted troth before many months have rolled away."

"But how are you to do that? You are entirely dependent on your father, and I have heard it said that he has higher views for you."

"It matters not; I shall not fall into them. I will seek the means of rendering myself independent, and then I will claim my bride at his hands."

"Ah! if you could only do that, how charming it will be. In the meantime, you wish me to become the channel of communication between yourself and

Lucia. For her sake, I consent to take this risk upon myself; have no fears of imprudence on my part, Vito; I will be wily as the serpent in the service of the cause I have undertaken, and you may both feel assured that I will do the little that is in my power to advance your interests with the marquis."

There was such apparent fervour and genuineness of feeling in her manner, that the count was completely deceived. He earnestly said:

"How shall I thank you for this sisterly kindness, Pepita? Be sure that in the future I will seek to prove my gratitude to you in every possible manner. Lucia does not understand your feelings toward her, but I shall write to her what has just passed between us, and she will learn to appreciate you as you deserve. I will now explain very minutely what my wishes are."

Pepita bent her head in intense attention, and eagerly listened to his directions for receiving and forwarding the letters without suspicion; when he at length arose to bid her adieu, he suddenly asked:

"How is it that I find you without your constant companion, Fido?"

She clasped her hands with an expression of sorrow, and said:

"Alas! I forgot my own grief in listening to you. My darling Fido took something that disagreed with him last evening, and died suddenly, in a fit of apoplexy. I had serious thoughts of giving up the dance last night, on account of my affliction; but I knew that Pedrazza would feel delighted if I failed to attend his wedding. See—I have put on mourning for my pet, and I intend to wear it as many days as he had numbered years."

And she held out her round arm, with a narrow band of black crape upon the wrist, fastened by a jet button.

"And very becoming mourning it is, too," said the count, gallantly. "Many a sculptor would esteem it a favour to use your exquisite hand and arm as a model, Pepita. I have never seen any other so perfect."

"Ah, you flatter Vito! How can you say that with truth, when you have asked a hand that you must think fairer than mine? I do not place myself in comparison with Lucia, in any respect; and it seems to me treason to her that you can see anything perfect in another."

The count seriously said:

"Lucia pleases me entirely. Her love satisfies the requirements of my heart; but she is not so silly or exacting as to expect me to have no eyes for the perfections of another."

"Ah! then she is far less exacting than I should be, I assure you. Such love as I could give must be returned with entire devotion, or my heart would be devoured with jealousy. Yes—when I do love, it will be with desperation."

And the speaker raised her large eyes to his face, suffused with what he mistook for the dew of intense feeling.

He asked, with much interest:

"Is it not true that this love is already awakened, Pepita? Report says that you are about to become the bride of young Santani."

There was a sudden flash of anger, which subsided into paleness, and she vehemently asked:

"Who could have thus misled you? I detest Santani—I have never had a thought of marrying him. Neither would my father be satisfied for me to make such a marriage as that."

"If you do not like him, it is sufficient reason for you not to accept him; but, in a worldly point of view, I cannot see why your father should object. Santani is rich, and he will inherit money from his parents."

"Money is no object either with my father or myself. We are contented with what we possess; but, when I marry, I must have an educated and refined man for my husband. My father has lifted me above my station by giving me the culture of a lady, and it is not probable that I shall find any one in my own sphere to suit me at all. Wild and reckless as I often am, I am not less fastidious in my tastes than the finest dame who counts her ancestors back to the glorious days when Italy was the mistress of the world. No, Vito, I shall never marry a mere plodding money-getter like poor Santani!"

"Poor, indeed, since he is not to win you, on whom I know he has set his heart. But I must bid you adieu, for the sun is getting high in the heavens, and I must reach Catania before nightfall. I shall remember your benevolence, and send you the most beautiful white poodle I can find in that place."

"Thank you; but I think I should prefer an Italian greyhound, of the smaller species. Another poodle would remind me so constantly of my poor darling Fido, that it would be an affliction in place of a pleasure. Send me a lovely little greyhound, and I will call him Vito, and cherish him for your sake."

"I shall remember—you may expect one before

long; and now, Pepita, console my darling for my absence. I dread the lonely days she will spend in the castle. She greatly needs some one near her own age to associate familiarly with; be her friend, her counsellor, and you may count on my eternal gratitude."

"I promise to be all that, and more to her," replied Pepita, with a hidden meaning he was far from comprehending. "I will convince Lucia that I am indeed her friend. Though I am sure she has hitherto mistrusted me, I do not resent that, for I love her too much to bear malice."

"And she will love you now; she will learn to trust you as implicitly as I do. Good-bye, Pepita."

The two parted. Up to the last moment Pepita maintained the part she had so adroitly assumed, and the count left her with the blissful belief that she was the noblest and most disinterested of friends. She watched his receding form with flashing eyes and curling lip, and her hands were unconsciously clenched till the nails made a deep red indentation on the rosy palms. She bitterly uttered:

"Fool! to place yourself and her so completely in my power. Permit your letters to pass through my hands, and see what they will say to her when they reach hers. Strange messages will they bear, after I have exercised my skill upon them. Luckily, I know enough of your affairs, Sir Count, to impose my own version of your proceedings on a love-sick fool like Lucia. Yes—I hold her fate in my hands, and I will crush the very life out of her at my leisure."

She went to her own apartment, to reflect on what she had heard, and arrange her future plan of action in such a manner as would most speedily elevate her to the position she so ardently coveted.

Pepita had no decided preference for Vittorio, therefore she had listened to his revelation concerning Lucia with perfect composure. If any other could have made her a countess, and the future mistress of a home as magnificent as Colonna Castle, she would have accepted him quite as readily, and she now calculated chances as coolly as if no personal feelings were concerned in the matter.

The time passed on, and at length she heard the tramp of her father's horse, for which she had been impatiently listening. Baldoni had been on a mission of importance, and she was burning with anxiety to know if he had possessed the nerve actually to accomplish it.

In a few moments he came in, looking even more sallow than usual, and wearing on his face a strangely wild expression. Pepita regarded him with calm surprise; she tauntingly said:

"After all, you had not the courage to do it, and you have brought the letter back with you, after putting me to such trouble to prepare it."

He sunk on a chair, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. In a husky voice, he presently said:

"No—I have not. I have sent it, and now I would give all I have if it could be recalled. Although I have long meditated on the means of committing this crime, now it is accomplished, I feel as if I have done that which is unpardonable."

Pepita arose, and poured strong wine from a flask she had brought in for that purpose; for she knew her father would need it if he had really completed his errand. She calmly said:

"It is strange that I have more courage than you seem to possess. If you reflect that we are only removing an obstacle from the upward path we are resolved to tread, you will soon recover your usual composure. Count Angostina will perish; but of what value is his life to any one? He is a neglectful son, an indifferent brother, and I think I have heard you say that he leads a most reckless and dissipated life. Why, then, should you hesitate about putting him out of a world in which he is no longer necessary?"

Baldoni regarded her with a half-bewildered expression; he vaguely muttered:

"He was fond of me as a lad: he wasn't bad-hearted. He would never have hurt a hair of my head, yet I have sent him his death-warrant. Oh, child, are you quite sure that—that this fatal letter will do its errand? I almost hope that it will not. I—I have a strange feeling here, that I am afraid I never leave me when I hear that he is really dead." And he laid his hand upon his heart.

"Tush! such drivelling is unworthy of a man of your sense," replied his daughter, with some impatience. "Regard him as dead from this moment; for as surely as the letter reaches his hand, and he opens it himself, so surely will he perish as Fido did; yes—his fate will be even more sudden. Are you quite sure it will reach its destination?"

Baldoni sat with dilating eyes and working lips: Pepita approached, and laid her hand upon his shoulder, as she repeated her question. Making an effort to recover composure, he slowly said:

"There is no reason why it should not. Count Angostina is in Berlin, where he intends to remain

during the gay season. The mails pass regularly to and fro, and his father hears from him every month. Oh, no! there is no hope left that the letter will not reach him, and do its dreadful work."

Pepita again offered him wine, which he eagerly swallowed, and she watched its effect upon him until his eyes began to glisten, and the leaden hue of his complexion changed to a more natural tint. She then caressingly said:

"My darling father, you look on this affair too seriously. I did not shrink when I offered up my pretty Fido as a sacrifice to your curiosity last evening; then why should you feel so badly about what will happen to this supernumerary count? His life is of no more real value than that of my precious pet."

"But this is a human soul, child, sent into the great unknown unprepared; perhaps unwilling to leave its earthly tenement. It is that which shakes me so."

There was a tone of wild dread in his voice, that made the listener shiver, in spite of her hardness; but she lightly replied:

"There is time enough to think of that. Come, drain the flask, and hear what I have to tell you. Look on Count Angostina as already dead and buried; for he will not live two hours after opening your letter. When I hear that he is safe under the sod, I shall feel as if I am a step nearer the goal of my ambition; for Vittorio has voluntarily placed himself and his adored Lucia at my mercy."

This communication partially aroused the half-paralyzed faculties of Baldoni, and he rapidly asked:

"In what way can he have done this?"

She scornfully replied:

"He has done me the high honour to propose that I shall play the part of go-between for himself and that detestable girl. He is positively pledged to her, and vows that he will marry her in defiance of his father. Think of it! This foundling, this pauper, educated by charity, with not even a name to call hers—by, aspires to become a Countess of Colonna, and Vittorio is weak and mad enough to think of estranging himself from his father—of forfeiting his inheritance, to make her such. Is it not shameful?"

"Pray explain to me what he really asked of you."

"He wishes me to receive and forward his letters. Let Lucia beware lest some of them may bring to her as sudden a fate as that which awaits Count Angostina."

Baldoni seemed endued with sudden energy. He imperiously said:

"I will have none of that, Pepita. Understand me at once, and act on my warning. The life of this girl is important to me—why, I will not now explain; but I will not have it tampered with. If I thought you would attempt to use your deadly drugs against her, I would effectually prevent it by removing them from you."

"Ha! ha! so, her pretty face has made its way to your heart too, and you wish to save her, to become the nurse and companion of your old age. Well—I promise not to talk you, provided you give me Vittorio, and the away of his lordly home. I wish you also to comprehend me fully. I am not jealous of Lucia, for I care too little for that silly boy to cherish such a feeling. I only care for what he can bestow upon me. If I loved him, it would be far different; then she would not be safe from me an hour. She could not breathe the same air with me and live."

Baldoni drew a long breath. After a pause, he said:

"I believe you speak the truth, Pepita; and I lay aside my fears on Lucia's account. One death lying at our door will be enough to repent of. What use will you make of the letters confided to you? You will not deliver them, of course?"

"There you are mistaken. I shall examine them, and alter them to suit my own purposes. Do you remember that we three took lessons from the same master, and learned to write almost exactly alike? You see that it will be easy to make any alterations I please, or even to write another letter to suit my own views. I shall make Lucia believe that Vittorio finds there is no escape from the marriage with the heiress of Amalfi; and with her conscientious scruples, she is exactly the person to give him up, even if it breaks her own heart."

"Her not danger of that," sneered her father. "Hearts are rather tougher than poets think, and not half so easily broken as sentimental people imagine. At any rate, Lucia's must brokenly live on, for I have laid out a very different fate for her."

Baldoni spoke with the hard autocracy natural to him, and his daughter saw that he had quite recovered his usual equanimity. After a few moments of deep thought, he coldly went on:

"It is necessary for the success of my plans that the marquis shall become so much enraged with Lucia as to cast her off without the provision he has

promised her. If he can be wrought on to do this, she will be thrown completely in my power, and I shall use it to further my own views. The letters sent by both Vittorio and herself must be laid before him, while you manufacture others for the perusal of the lovers."

"As you will. It will be best to screen myself from all chance of the anger of the marquis falling on me, and placing the letters in his hands will effectually do that. But you forget that Lucia, with her fine voice, can easily find means to render herself independent, without accepting assistance from you."

Baldoni's face darkened at this suggestion; but he said:

"If she loves the young count, she will never use her talents as a means of support; for she will feel that his pride will never permit him to make a public singer his bride. She will endure much suffering sooner than relinquish the vain hopes she cherishes. Thus I shall hold her at my mercy. I will at once inform the marquis of the arrangement to maintain a correspondence through you, and I know beforehand what a white rage it will throw him into. But he will control himself before me. He is the only man I have ever seen, with so violent a temper, who can so completely master its outward expression."

"I am afraid that he can never be wrought on to part from Lucia. He is so frail, so dependent on her for amusement, and for good nursing, that it would fare ill with him if he were deprived of her care."

"But for those considerations he would have sent her off last night, when the notable discovery was made that his best loved son is ready to play the fool for her pretty face," said Baldoni, bitterly. "But I do not despair of yet inducing him to give her up."

"It seems that the marquis is not the only one ready to play the fool for her sake," was the sarcastic rejoinder of Pepita.

Her father turned sternly upon her:

"It is not for you to sneer at me or my preferences. I have been a most indulgent father to you, Pepita, and you shall not speak to me so disrespectfully. With your assistance, I have committed a great crime, solely for the purpose of elevating you to a high worldly position. Henceforth, we are allies in crime, as in success; and I will bear no taunts from your lips. If I forbear toward you, you shall equally do so toward me. Remember that it is my firmness, my dexterity, that can yet consummate your wishes, for you have only entered on the path that leads to the brilliant reward to be attained. Make yourself useful to Lucia; gain her entire confidence, and, if possible, her affection, for that will further my plans. If you wish it, I can easily gain from the marquis permission for you to spend a few days at the castle with her."

"Oh, do, if you please! I have always wished that I could make the castle my home, as she does. I can rehearse my part as its future mistress while I remain. But you need not speak so crossly to me: I know all that I owe you, and you know that never was a father loved better than I love you—you dear, old scheming man that you are!"

And Pepita made her peace, as she usually did after being chided, by throwing her arms around his neck, and kissing him with a great apparent show of fondness.

The scene was ended by the appearance of the housekeeper at the door, and the announcement that dinner was served.

CHAPTER VI.

And what, I pray, canst thou bestow?
Canst thou the glorious mind of man,
In all its proud aspirings, know?
May one like thee its nature scan?

FOUNT.

COUNT COLONNA soon left his paternal halls far behind him. In truth, the irritated state of his mind caused him thoughtlessly to press his high-mettled steed to his best pace, till foam gathered on his flanks, and his servant ventured to remark:

"We have plenty of time before us, my lord; for the packet does not leave Catania before to-morrow, at noon."

"True," replied his master, slackening his pace; "and this beautiful country is better worth looking at than the dingy walls of a town. I will have pity on Saladin, and proceed at a more moderate pace."

He glanced over the panorama spread before him as he spoke, and was struck anew with its exceeding loveliness. Sicily was well called the "Garden of the Hesperides," for no land beneath the broad cope of heaven is more beautiful or productive.

The undulating country was covered with luxuriant vegetation, mingled with groves of olive and mulberry; and beyond them lay the blue immensity of the Mediterranean, glistening in the bright sunshine. In truth, the traveller soon found the last oppressive, and

he was glad to gain the shelter of a group of chestnut trees, which tradition said once formed the huge trunk of a single forest giant that had been discovered by time, or rent by the rage of the elements. It was called by the peasants *Castagna di cento cavalli*, or the chestnut tree of a hundred horses, because in its palmy days it was believed to have been capable of sheltering that number of animals, and it is one of the curiosities usually visited by travellers on their way to Mount Etna.

Its wide-spreading branches now offered shelter to our travellers, and they dismounted and secured their steeds, that they might enjoy a siesta during the heat of the day, and discuss the lunch Lingui had been thoughtful enough to bring with him from the castle.

Of the latter, the valet appropriated much the larger share; for in spite of the exercise he had taken, the young count had very little appetite. When he arose, and strolled away to dream of Lucia and plan for the future, Lingui sat down in his vacated place, and did ample justice to the good things he had provided.

Vittorio wandered slowly around the famous tree, apparently examining its gnarled and rifted branches; but, in reality, his thoughts were far away. He had often visited the spot before, and it no longer possessed the attraction of novelty; therefore his mind easily wandered to the miserable uncertainty of his own affairs, and the beloved one from whose presence he had been banished.

His reverie was interrupted by a slight noise near him; and looking round, he saw a tall woman, with eyes of intense blackness, and an expression of benevolence mingled with shrewdness upon her face. She wore a dark robe, girt in at the waist with a cord, which fell in flowing folds to her feet. A white mantilla was thrown over her head, and a string of beads, sustaining a crucifix, hung from her girdle.

The count knew at once that she was what in Sicily is known as a nun of the house; that is, a woman who has taken the vow of celibacy, and pledged herself to perform certain ceremonies, and undergo penance, without immuring herself in a convent.

She held in her hand a small basket, nearly filled with herbs, which she seemed to have been gathering. The young stranger nodded to her with his genial smile, and something in his face seemed to attract her gaze. She cordially returned his salutation, and said:

"A fair day to you, signor, and a happy ending to your journey. But if I read your face aright, you expect little satisfaction from words. Your heart is in the home you have left, for I see that it is not bounding joyfully with the anticipated pleasures of meeting those to whom you go."

Vittorio was arrested by the singularity and freedom of this address. He regarded her attentively, as he said:

"You must be a shrewd reader of faces if you can see all this in mine."

She gravely and impressively replied:

"Those who have suffered much themselves soon learn to detect its signs, even in the youngest face. You bear within you a disappointed and restless heart. Something very near akin to anger is surging there, against the one to whom you owe allegiance and duty. Even now you are meditating rebellion against him who has the power to make or mar your future destiny. Is it not so?"

The young man regarded her with intense surprise.

He quickly asked:

"How can you have discovered all this in my face? I had no idea that it could be read as the page of an open book."

The nun smiled faintly.

"Have I not spoken the truth, signor? Ah, you need not answer me in words. The expression that flitted over your face but now assures me that my random guess has hit the mark. Will you permit the stranger whom fate has casually thrown upon your path to warn you that, in obeying the commandment which says 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' can alone be found prosperity or contentment. I doubted this once; but I know it now by bitter experience."

"Who are you? and why should you speak to me thus?" asked the count, with slight asperity. "Do you know anything of me or my affairs, that you should venture on offering such a warning?"

"I know nothing of you, signor, except what my magnetic enables me to read in your ingenious face, which is an open scroll to one who has the wit and power to interpret it. You are now to grief, for you have not yet learned to conceal its signs. There is one sorrow a man of your age is likely to feel keenly—that is, a disappointment in love; and with so handsome a cavalier as you are, parental authority is likely to run counter to your wishes. Nay, do not blush; for I am old enough to be your mother, and I but use the freedom of one in speaking to you."

"Yet I think it very singular that you should address a stranger thus."

"Well, perhaps it is. I am unlike other people, I believe; not, to tell the truth, do I care to resemble them much. I am of gipsy blood, as my dark face may already have informed you, and I possess the gift they claim by inheritance—that of foreseeing the future. Now you know that I belong to that weird race, you will feel less surprised at my power to read your feelings."

Vittorio touched the cross, and asked:

"Is not this a strange symbol to be worn by one of your blood?"

"No; for I am a Christian—a lay nun, as you may perceive from my costume. If I am of Saracenic descent, there is no reason why I shall cling to the Mussulman's faith when I have found a purer and more elevating one."

"Of course not—I merely asked for information. But if you can really foretell the future, may I ask of you to reveal to me what fate may have in store for me? That is, if it is bright; sorrow will come surely enough, without being foretold."

She fixed her large eyes on him, and impressively said:

"Life is a mingled web of good and ill, and no one can separate one from the other. If you would be told of the bright fortune, you must also hearken to the evil that as a shadow falls on every human lot. On that condition, I will look into the future for you, and reveal as much of the first as is necessary to disburse it."

Vittorio hesitated. He had little faith in the pretension; but the woman herself deeply interested him. At length he held out his hand with a smile, and said, as he drew a coin from his pocket with the other:

"Believe your people can do nothing unless the land is covered with silver. Here is my obligation; you can tell me as much as it will purchase."

The nun balanced the money upon her finger, and thoughtfully repeated his words.

"As much as this will purchase! Do you know that even to trifling a sum as this can often purchase life for the destitute—relief for the suffering? Yes, signor, I will keep your coin, for it will make one widow's heart sing for joy, trifling as its value seems to you. I do not often exchange my mystic lore for worldly gear; for I am a Christian woman, and not a wandering Zingari, as you may suppose. When I do such a thing, it is that I may gain the means of ministering to the necessities of those who are poorer than myself. Young man, I did not waylay you for the purpose of winning the gipsy's fee; something in your face attracted me, and I spoke the words I did almost without any volition of my own."

The count waved his hand impatiently.

"It matters not what your motive was; I shall be glad to profit by your gift to untangle the difficulties that beset me, if anything you can tell me can possibly have such power."

"I see that you are an unbeliever," she gravely said. "But that matters not. Let me look upon your face."

She took it in her own, and eagerly scanned the palm, shaking her head, and muttering to herself.

Vittorio at length became impatient, and drily said:

"It takes you a long time to determine what my fate shall be. Make up your mind quickly, and I will double the fee."

She waved her left hand toward him with a warning gesture, and muttered:

"Hush—hush, unbeliever, and let me hear what the spirit is whispering to me. I will first tell you of the past, and then, perhaps you will give credence to my predictions of the future."

Interested and a little awed by her manner, the count stood passive till the nun again spoke:

"Cradled in luxury, fondled in love, your life till very lately has been free from care or annoyance. But the passionate dream of youth has come to you, as to all of mortal mould, and you have taken the imprudent step which will lead to suffering to yourself—to great evil to her you love. Even now she is in danger from a false friend, from a naughty father, and an interested wooer."

Vittorio drew his hand decidedly away. He disdainfully said:

"Enough—your familiar is a false spirit, for he has not revealed to you the truth concerning my affairs. If I do love, the object of my passion is no girl around by faithful friends that she can be in no danger—I do not wish to hear any more."

"As you please," was the composed reply. "But time will surely prove to you that I have spoken the truth. A confidence you have recently given will be abused, for she in whom it was reposed seeks to supplant the possessor of your heart. I bid you beware of that false one. You will marry twice; the first time the bride will not be of your own choosing, and she—"

The young man hastily interrupted her:

"I shall marry but once; and if death snatches from me the joy of my life, no other woman shall ever fill her place."

"Ah! The first one will not be the joy of your life. She will bring you what every human heart requires—true sympathy, tender and enduring love; but bitter will be the trials you must both pass through before you obtain happiness."

"So, after spending the best years of my life with my well-dowered, but unloved bride, I am to bestow my hand on the one I prefer? Thank you—I had rather take my fate in my own hands, and carve out a more agreeable future for myself."

"Can the decrees of fate be changed by human effort?" asked the nun, gravely. "Go on your path, signor; but in five years to come, you will often recall the image of the sibyl, and remember how truly she predicted your future."

She bent her head in salutation, and turned away in the direction of a group of cottages that lay nearly at the foot of the descent, nestled in a grove of trees. Vittorio called after her:

"Come back and take the money I promised you. Even if my fortune does not please me, I must pay what I offered for it."

The nun paused in her descent; and after a moment of indecision, retraced her steps. She gravely said:

"I have no right to refuse your offering; but all that I earn is dedicated to charity. That is a part of the vow I have taken; and until I find what I have set out to seek, every penny I make must be devoted to the poor."

"Will you think me impertinent if I ask what you are in search of?"

"Certainly not. I am willing to tell any one, in the hope that they may aid me in finding a lost child."

"Your own child—"

She interrupted him:

"The child was not my own, for I have never been married; but she was entrusted to me in a most solemn manner by her dying mother. I have lost sight of her for many, many years; but I availed myself of the first moment of freedom to set out in search of her. When I find her, I will tell her the little I know of her poor mother; and if she needs a friend, I will be one to her."

"Really this is a strange quest for you to spend your days in. May I ask how long it has lasted?"

"It is seventeen years since the child I speak of was confided to me; but until within the last few months I have thought little about her. After the death of an aged and infirm mother, I constantly dreamed of the poor girl; and in my waking hours, something daily impressed me to seek her. The feeling at length grew so strong that my conscience was troubled by my long indifference to her fate; I took the vow which binds me to wear this dress, and minister to the wants of the destitute till my neglect is expiated, and my child found."

"Tell me your name, and perhaps I shall be able to aid you, for I know every family for miles around here; and if your lost protégée has been taken in one of these, I may have the power to furnish you with a clue to her asylum."

"My baptismal name was Lucia, and I am known as Sister Maria. But what causes you to flush and pale in so singular a manner, signor?"

"It is because I am interested in your story. Lucia is a sweet name; and I know a young girl who bears it, who came under the protection of my own family in a most singular manner. Ah! if she proves to be the child you seek, and you can give me a clue to her family, I shall be your everlasting debtor."

The woman grasped his hands eagerly.

"Tell me—tell me of her! I took my Lucia from the arms of her dying mother; I promised to watch over her future—to rear her as my own. But that night her father came; he had escaped from the prison to which he had been consigned for life, and made his way to the spot on which he knew his wife had taken refuge. He found her lifeless corpse; and never have I witnessed such grief as he manifested when convinced that her life was indeed gone. He watched beside her till she was laid in her humble grave, and then asked to have the infant, which his wife had solemnly given to me, remain with him for a few hours."

"I could not refuse this request; and he took the sleeping child into the room in which her mother had died. Worn out with watching, I slept heavily that night; and when I awoke, the door of my cottage was open, and the stranger was gone, taking the infant with him."

"But did you not follow him, and endeavour to recover the child? or were you willing to be rid of the charge?"

"I loved the helpless little creature, and I made every effort to recover her, without success. Signor Rispoli, as he called himself, had left no clue behind him, but I shall always believe that he wandered away in a fit of derangement. If he had been capable of reflection, he would have known that I would act a

better part by the poor babe than any stranger in whose care he might place her.

"Pray tell me of the young girl of whom you spoke."

While my mother lived, I stifled my wish to seek the child wherever she might be found; but, when she died, my conscience would not let me rest, and I took the vow which has kept me wandering from place to place for the last year, in the forlorn hope of finding her again. Something whispers to me that I shall yet meet her, and be of essential service to her."

Vittorio had listened to this revelation with the most vivid interest, and he now said:

"The young lady you seek may be the one of whom I speak; for my mother found her in a cottage on the Colonna estate, where she had been left to be nursed. A toil-worn traveller placed her there, with money to defray the charges for a few months, and a promise of more; but he never returned—never noticed her existence in any further manner; and if her beauty had not attracted the Lady of Colonna, who adopted and educated her as her own daughter, she must have grown up among the ignorant peasantry."

Sister Maria regarded him searchingly. She gravely said:

"And you are the heir of that ancient house. The founding is your true love, and the pride of your family forbids the marriage with an unknown and portionless girl. Am I not right, signor?"

Vittorio flushed deeply.

"You have divined a portion of the truth, but that is little to the purpose. Can you tell me anything of Lucia's family? Were she proved my equal in birth, I might be permitted to follow my own inclinations; for I am not the heir—I am but a younger son."

"Of the family of my Lucia I know nothing, save that her parents evidently belonged to the educated and refined classes. They were refugees from Italy, and I am sure Signor Rispoli was imprisoned for some political offence. His wife brought with her but few relics of their better days; and of the small sum of money she possessed, little was left when she died. The only thing she left was a small casket, containing an enamelled miniature of herself, from which the gold setting had been removed, to be sold. I have always carried it with me; and if your Lucia resembles it, I shall know that she is the one I seek—for, even as an infant, she was wonderfully like her mother."

"Pray let me see it," said Vittorio, eagerly.

"If you will accompany me to the cottage which shelters me for the present, I will gladly do so. The picture is safe there."

Of course there was no alternative but to consent, for the young count felt that he must see the miniature and set his doubts at rest; though, after all, he had gained no more information concerning Lucia's origin than he had felt convinced of before; that she was of gentle blood he had never doubted.

Returning to the spot on which Lingui was enjoying a comfortable siesta after his abundant meal, Vittorio aroused him, and ordered him to lead the horses towards the group of cottages, and remain with them while he entered one of the houses a few moments.

Lingui immediately prepared to obey, and in a few moments was ready to follow his master.

As they drew near the house, the count saw that it was built of blocks of lava, burned to perfect blackness, with a simple window and door opening towards the road. It contained two apartments, kept with more neatness than is common among the poorest class of the peasantry, and a healthy-looking woman sat just within the door, engaged in the usual employment of her caste, spinning flax; a pallid child, with eyes of almost preternatural brightness, sat up in a rough cradle near her, and a single glance assured the visitor that he was distorted in form, that he was one of those helpless cripples with which Southern Europe abounds.

A glance around enabled him to take in the furniture of the outer room. A bed stood in one corner, with a stand beside it, supporting a glass case, in which was a waxen image of the Virgin Mother, holding her child in her arms, and on the miniature shrine in front was placed a child's leg, also modelled in wax, which was doubtless intended to represent that of the unfortunate boy in the cradle, and he felt sure that prayers were daily offered to the Madonna for the restoration of the helpless little cripple. In one corner of the room was a butt of the thin sour wine used by the peasants; and on a table in the centre of the floor the usual dinner was awaiting the return of the lodger. It consisted of a dish of boiled macaroni, a loaf of brown bread, and a saucer of fennel—the last being a favourite addition to a Sicilian meal.

When the mistress of the cottage saw them come in, she rose with natural courtesy, and greeted the stranger.

"You are welcome to our humble roof, signor."

"This is the young Count of Colonna, Rosella; and he thinks he can aid me in tracing my lost one. I



[PEPITA'S CONTEMPT FOR VITTORIO.]

casually made his acquaintance, while gathering herbs to strengthen your little boy. I do not know how I came to speak to him of my mission; but it was lucky I did so, for he knows, or he thinks he knows, my Lucia."

The woman looked pleased and surprised, and she replied, with a devout motion towards the waxen Madonna:

"I told you if you would only persevere in your petition to Our Lady to help you, she would guide you to the right way to find your child. You see I was right."

"Perhaps so; at any rate, the prayers made me more patient and hopeful. Be seated, signor, while I seek the miniature of which I spoke."

The nun pushed a rude wooden seat towards him, and immediately disappeared in the adjoining apartment.

The count turned toward the intelligent-looking child, and asked:

"Does your son suffer much? I see that he is an invalid."

"Poor fellow! he is very patient, and I fear he is hopelessly lame; but I am thankful that he no longer suffers from acute pain since that good sister came hither, and used such simple remedies as are within our reach. She is very good, and she knows of many things that quiet his restlessness. My boy was not always so—he could run and walk with the best; but one unlucky day he mounted a neighbour's donkey, was thrown violently to the earth, and his health so much impaired that he has never walked a step since."

"Could not a good surgeon have remedied the injury?" asked the young man.

"Such as we are cannot command the services of a good surgeon, signor. Something might have been done, perhaps; but I had not the means to pay for it, for my husband is dead, and at times I find it hard to live, though my cottage belongs to me. Since Sister Maria came, it has been better, for she spends all she can spare in trying to make things more comfortable."

"How long has she been with you?"

"Not very long, and I hoped she would never leave us; but now she has found a clue to the young girl she is seeking, I am afraid she will be going away."

Vittorio made no reply, for at that moment the nun returned, carrying in her hand a small oval of ivory, on which an exquisitely-coloured female head was painted.

A single glance was sufficient to assure him that Sister Maria's hope would not be disappointed. In

the limpid eyes, the smiling mouth, and general outline of the features, there was so strong a resemblance to Lucia that she might herself have been the original of the miniature. His heart beat quickly as he said:

"The person who sat for this must have been the mother of the young girl of whom I spoke. The likeness to her is very striking."

Sister Maria clasped her hands, and, turning toward the Madonna, devoutly said:

"Virgin Mother, I thank thee that thou hast at last guided me to success."

Then addressing the count, she said:

"And now, signor, if you will give me such directions as will enable me to find my child, I shall be much indebted to you."

The young count was slightly embarrassed by this straightforward request. He said:

"If it is your purpose to put forward a claim to Signorina Lucia, I scarcely think it will be allowed. She has been reared at Colonna Castle with the care that would have been bestowed upon a daughter of the house. Since the death of my mother, she has been the companion and nurse of my father, who is a very aged and infirm man. Lucia herself will never consent to leave him while he lives; she has promised him as much."

"I shall not ask her to do so. If she is useful in her sphere, she is doing God's work; and that is all that any human being was created for. But I must see her—must explain to her the cause of my neglect for so many long years, and tell her the little I know of her parents."

"That seems right enough, and she may need a fast friend near her. I will write a few lines to Lucia myself, which will be a passport to her confidence. For the rest, the castle is but fifteen miles away, and any peasant can direct you to the halls of Colonna."

"Thank you. I will gladly accept the letter, and lose no time in delivering it. I will bring you paper and pen."

She was turning away, when Rosella called her attention to the dinner.

"You must need refreshment after your long tramp, sister; and perhaps the signor will condescend to join us in our humble meal."

"Thank you; but I have already dined," said the count. "I have paper and pencil in my pocket, and I will sit under the shade of your trees and write my letter while you refresh yourselves."

Vittorio stepped out, and placed himself on a rustic bench beneath a mulberry tree, where he dashed off a

few lines to Lucia, describing his meeting with the nun, and the singular result which had flowed from it. He then went on:

"My new acquaintance seems to be very eccentric, but I believe her to be a good and true Christian; and it is some comfort to me to know that you will have a friend near you in whom you can fully trust. The influence you possess with my father will doubtless enable you to gain his consent to offer the nun an asylum at the castle, and I think he will find her a most efficient person to distribute his charity. She is a sort of Sister of Mercy already, and seems to have infinite compassion for the suffering and helpless."

Through her means we may perhaps be able to communicate by letter with more facility than through Pepita, though she consented to aid us readily enough; and she expressed such attachment for you that I think you must needs lay aside your mistrust. Give Pepita your friendship, my dear Lucia; for I am sure she merits it."

"But I must warn you against one thing. The new friend who bears this to you thinks she can foresee events, and she has foretold the most incredible future for me."

"Do not listen to her predictions—they can never be fulfilled; and it is but a delusion on her part to imagine that she possesses the gifts of the seer."

"Oh, my darling Lucia, how fondly my heart yearns toward you! but cruel fate banishes me from your adored presence."

"It shall not be so, my love, for I will win the right to claim you, or perish in the attempt."

"Your devoted,

"VITTORIO COLONNA."

When he came to write the address, he paused, uncertain whether he should bestow her new name upon her, or continue to use that which his mother had given her in baptism—that of Vanessa, her own maiden name; but he finally addressed it to Signorina Lucia Vanessa; for, after all, Rispoli was probably an assumed name, and she really had no more right to it than to the one by which she had hitherto been known.

By this time the sun was visibly sinking in the west; and the count took leave of his new friends, after slyly dropping a piece of gold in the cradle of the boy.

He would gladly have returned to the castle with the stranger; but he felt sure that such a course would give deep offence to his father; and he reluctantly mounted his horse, and turned his head in the direction of Catania followed by Lingui.

(To be continued.)



[THE CHAPLAIN WAITS UPON HOLT ON THE MORNING OF EXECUTION.]

THE WARNING VOICE.

By the author of "Mrs. Larkhall's Boarding School," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER LVII.

DRIVEN ONWARD.

The hour draws near. *Shakespeare.*

Let reason now,
Not passion, be thy counsellor.

The Hunchback.

THERE must have been something peculiar about Donna Ximena's wine, or it might have been only the result of the man Bob's style of pouring it out. Certain it is that though his mate, as he called him, started up with open eyes and mouth, he could neither see nor speak. Whether he heard what had passed was doubtful; but all he did was to stand swaying to and fro for a few moments—making a choking noise the while—and then to drop back heavily into his chair.

"He'll do," was Bob's decided remark. Then he bestirred himself with the utmost alacrity to carry out the line of conduct he had suggested.

The escape from the house was effected without difficulty, the cab was reached, the lady took her seat in it, and then Bob respectfully touched his cap, and was about to go.

"You will get into trouble over this?" asked Ximena.

"Oh, no, ma'am," he replied. "I shall have got into a new skin by to-morrow. You'll see me at Flacker's, and you won't know me."

The lady hastily slipped something in the way of money into his hand; he thanked her, and the cab drove off.

His occupant was anxious and excited. Another chance had opened up for her: escape had once more become possible, and yet she trembled, she knew not why. A presentiment of coming evil rested like a dark cloud upon her mind. In vain did she look upon the bright side of the matter: the clouds swallowed up the sunshine.

"I'm dreadfully low to-night," she exclaimed, pressing her cold hands upon her brow, burning with fever; "but well I may be. The part of a hunted fugitive isn't the liveliest in the world for a woman to play."

The cab stopped at the back door of a public-house, or rather at the end of a long passage leading to the house.

Directly it did so, a man, whom she recognized as

Flacker, rushed out, and, tearing open the door, almost dragged her from her seat.

"Quick, quick!" he said. "Into the passage. So. Follow me close, don't y' know."

It was easy for Flacker to give the direction; but his long and loose limbs got over the ground so fast that Ximena struggled in vain to keep up with him.

"Queer place, but safe," he rattled on as they went. "'Safe's' right. Danger thickens, don't y' know. Never mind. We've got the start. Clever fellow, Cecil Ingarstone. Ha, ha! Took to Bob directly. Said he knew he could trust him—saw it in his face. Artful dog, Bob: artful, knowing, don't y' know. Here we are."

He had pushed open a swinging door, letting out a strong odour of rank tobacco in doing so, and they were ascending a winding staircase, which terminated abruptly at a door. Threapats of the knuckles caused this to be opened, and they stepped into a small room, only lit by the red glare of the fire in the grate.

The glare was strong on the face of the man who had opened the door.

The face seemed familiar to Ximena.

"Nolan!" she involuntarily exclaimed.

He smiled faintly in answer, or she would have believed herself mistaken. They had not met since the day when Nolan received his dismissal at Ingarstone, and she could hardly credit the change which had come over him. We know that he was greatly altered before his final interview with Beatrice Ingarstone, a few days before. But the brief interval seemed to have made an utter wreck of him. It was the effect of a deadly passion raging in the heart, and consuming its victim, like an inward fire.

"You hardly know me?" he asked, in acknowledgment of Ximena's undisguised surprise.

"You are much changed," she replied.

"Changed! Yes, and more changed in heart than in face. Flacker knows that."

"'Flacker's' right," muttered that individual, as he busied himself in poking the fire into a smart blaze.

"You may know it, too," Nolan went on, finding a morbid pleasure in dwelling on his own misery. "It's too late for compliment and prettiness between us now, and I may speak out—I will speak out, and I tell you that if I wasn't changed, in mind and heart as well as body, you and I, madam, wouldn't be here face to face to-night. You're an adventuress—and worse. Give me your hand?"

She thought him mad.

His eyes, indeed, shone in the fire-light more like those of a maniac than a sane man.

Nevertheless, she gave her hand.

"You tried to entrap Ormond Regrave to marry you, so that you might avenge your murdered mother by making his life a curse and torment to him," said Nolan.

"I did."

"And you did well. But you had already done better. You had already dealt Ingarstone a blow from which he and his will never recover."

"Who says it?" asked Ximena, fiercely.

"The world."

"It lies, then—I am innocent."

"'Innocent's' right," cried Flacker, hastily interposing. "Surprised, Mr. Nolan, you shouldn't have more delicacy."

"Pardon me, madam," he said, addressing Ximena, but dropping her hand; "but I had hoped to find you animated by a higher spirit. I expected to find you glorying in an act, which, if cruel, was still great. Wrong justifies wrong."

Astounded at his words, Ximena could only marvel at the infatuation which dictated them.

Strong as her own feelings were, she had no idea of the effect which intense brooding over wrong and injustice will produce on a strong mind. It is like a fiery poison in the veins—it exasperates, infuriates. The sense of right and wrong yields to the demoniacal influence. All men, philosophers tell us, are more or less mad, and it is certain that the man who yields himself up to the influence of any strong passion passes the boundary line of sanity.

Flacker, used to the change which a few days had wrought in Nolan's feelings and appearance, thought now only of business.

"Time flies," he said, looking at his watch—one of those secretive ones, which only give a peep at the hour through an eye-hole in the case. "Not a minute to spare. It was right that you," he addressed the lady, "should see Nolan, and understand his position. Crook's gone—fled—disappeared. Sly old fox! game to the last. 'Game's' right. Yet they ran him to earth; but Nolan's the will and the means to do all the old man would have done, don't y' know. Redgrave's good as settled. As for Ingarstone—"

"And his son?" she interrupted, vindictively.

"'Son's' right. And daughter, too. Not a chance. Not a ghost of one. Tell her."

The last sentence was addressed to Nolan, who thereupon described the singular chance which had led him into the empty house in which Darn Crook was in hiding, and the interview which followed, interrupted as it was by the police who were in search of the old man, but whom he had once more eluded.

He next rapidly described what took place in re-

spect to the maniac in the concealed room in which he had sought shelter.

"You know this man?" he asked.

"So far as one may be said to know an insane person," was the reply.

"But you know that this insanity was due to causes which might at any moment cease?"

"They told me so."

"And you were not slow to avail yourself of that information?"

"True. I used it to keep Ingarstone in check, and as the ground of my influence over his son. But for the existence of this miserable being, I could not have held my position at Ingarstone; indeed, I should never have got admittance there."

"But how did you account for the man's silence all this time?"

"By representing to them that he was sane enough; but that I and others had secured his admission to a private lunatic asylum, on the plea of insanity; from which asylum I had power to release him at any moment."

"And the Ingarstones believed this?"

"Up to a certain time."

"Beyond which they grew incredulous?"

"Yes. Because I was driven to prevaricate—because, when hard-pressed, I could not bring the man forward, inasmuch as they would have seen that he was a real and not a pretended lunatic. With that discovery my power would have ended."

Nolan's eyes suddenly brightened.

"But if you could have brought forward this dreaded phantom in his right mind?" he asked.

"My triumph would have been complete. It was of this that I lived in the daily hope."

"And is it now too late?"

"What! Has the moment arrived?"

"It has."

"He has recovered?"

"Yes. You see that heaven itself fights with us. Think what Redgrave's feelings will be when he discovers who and what he is. Picture his chagrin when he learns what sort of alliance he has formed. You were not worthy of him, no! And I—a mere admiral's son—was beneath his notice. He despises us, treats us as the grass under his feet. But he shall see—he shall see. We are not worse than trampled worms, and they will turn and sting."

The excited, furious way in which he poured out these words was alarming. His face grew red, then purple. The veins started out like cords on either side of his temples, and his eyes blazed with an unwholesome fire. It was like a crazed man speaking.

"Pray calm yourself," cried Ximena, "and let us think. My brain is in a whirl. Flacker, you are calm and collected; what do you say? Is there hope for me in this? Would the certainty of danger to him and his induce him to call off his blood hounds?"

"And let you escape?"

"Yes."

"Better get off while you've the chance. Make all sure, don't y' know, and bargain afterwards."

That was Flacker's advice.

Ximena heard it with a shudder.

Somehow, she could not tell why, this project of flight had grown inexpressibly distressing and repugnant to her. Her heart quailed at the prospect of it. Only the weak terrify themselves with presentiments; but there was gipsy blood in her veins, and she was by nature superstitious.

"If I must go, I must," she sighed; then, addressing Nolan, she added: "It's at least a comfort to know that all is not lost; that you will not spare those who are your foes as well as ours. I needn't ask you to swear to me that you will not. I can trust you as I can trust myself."

"You may," he replied.

"I am sure of it, and I thank heaven for that blessing. Oh, yes," she cried, suddenly brightening up with enthusiasm, "I am grateful for the knowledge that even now my mother's memory will be avenged, and the thunderbolt will yet fall on the wretches who are driving me like a criminal out of my native land! Good-bye, Mr. Nolan. I would give ten years of my life to witness the triumph you will enjoy. Come, Flacker, is all ready?"

"And waiting," said the restless individual addressed.

He sprang up and offered one of his loose arms—all his limbs seemed loosely united in the centre of his body—and they disappeared by a door opposite to that at which they had entered.

Nolan stood for a moment, listening to their retreating footsteps.

"Surely that poor wretch is innocent!" he exclaimed, as the sound died away. "What is more probable than that those fiends are hunting her down, under the pretext of guilt, to silence a witness of their own crimes? If they are, by heaven they shall find out their mistake, or I will know the reason why!"

The fierce, passion-inflamed mind is borne away by

impulse and surmise, and Nolan had gone beyond the point at which reason influences the judgment.

CHAPTER LVIII.

SUNDAY NIGHT.

If there are portents, as we know there are,
Of leaf, and bird, and metal sensitive
To airy influence, that foretell the storm,
Why should not we have our presentiments?

Cartwright.

XIMENA stole out of the tavern alone, Flacker shaking hands with her at the door.

Before this, he had seen that her veil was carefully tied down around her face; and, at his suggestion, she had turned her shawl, so that it might present a darker surface than it had hitherto done.

It had been arranged that she was to go the rest of the distance before her without a cab, choosing the least frequented streets, and keeping in the shadow as much as possible.

"You understand?" Flacker asked, as she hesitated at the door, her hand trembling in his.

"Oh, yes, perfectly; but—"

"Well? Out with it," he whispered.

"Don't you think," she faltered, "that if I put off going till another night, it would be better? Never mind losing the berth you've taken for me. Better than being followed and brought back. And they do know what my arrangements were."

"So they do; but you've got the start of 'em, don't y' know," said Flacker. "No, no. Your chance is to-night—wait till to-morrow, and I won't answer for your escape."

"It may not be necessary," said Ximena.

"Eh? Not necessary?"

"No. Do you know what to-night is?"

"Why, Sunday."

"And to-morrow? Holt dies to-morrow, and I am safe."

Flacker shook his head dubiously.

"Take my advice," he said.

"As you please," she answered, meekly.

And, with a strange reluctance, she drew her thin shawl about her shoulders, and prepared to go. Flacker heard her teeth chattering, and saw that she trembled from head to foot, as if with intense cold. But he did not remark on it. He only opened the door for her, and whispered a friendly "Good night!" If she answered him, the gust of wind tearing in at the open door drowned her words, and he hardly noted her retreating form in his struggles to push to the door and fasten it.

For the rough weather still continued.

To-night, as on every night for a week past, the heavens were overcast, and heavy rain would have fallen, but for a cold, blustering wind, which held its own against all comers—clearing the streets in towns, stripping the forest trees, and clashing the waves to madness away out at sea, where it was free and uncontrolled.

It was with difficulty that Ximena could make way against the blusterer as she toiled slowly along, and the cold seemed to chill the very marrow in her bones.

If, indeed, it was the cold; and even she half-doubted it. For she had not been too delicately reared. She had been used to exposure and to the fury of the elements in many of the phases of her adventurous life, and she never remembered to have felt as she felt to-night.

"Perhaps I am ill," she muttered through her chattering teeth. "My head is like a burning coal, and my hands and feet are like stones. I have cold—fever! Heaven knows I may well have. Or is it something worse? I was never like this before. I'm afraid of everything—even of myself. Some horrible fancy haunts me, and I can't tell what it is. Are these feelings presentiments? Is it true that the dead won't lie still in their graves; but haunt people and drive them on to their doom? What verities were those I once read about—what were they about?"

And still no peace for the restless clay

Will wave or mould allow;

The horrid thing pursues my soul—

It stands before me now!

No, no! It's a lie. Oh, mercy! mercy!"

"Hallo! Hallo!" cried a rough, manly voice.

The wretched woman felt hands laid upon her arms, and started out into the road, awaking as if from a dream.

Her feelings had overpowered her, and she knew that she had been talking aloud. Not for long, she hoped and trusted. And the man who had stopped her—who was he? What had he heard?

It was too dark, and the night was too boisterous for her to discern anything clearly. Besides, she dared not stop. Her safety lay in pushing on, and reaching her destination with all possible speed.

Once only she turned, and gave a shuddering glance behind her.

The street she was then in was dark and empty. Two or three dim lights seemed to heighten its gloom. She thought, indeed, that under one of these she saw some one standing, looking after her. And what then? It might be a policeman. Or some night prowler, such as the streets abound with. Or it might even be fancy, and nothing more.

So she argued, and while the thought was in her mind, she emerged into the open illuminated square in front of the railway station, and forgot everything else in the business of getting her ticket, and securing her place in the night train.

There were not many passengers yet, for it wanted some twenty minutes of the time for the train to start. She, therefore, with a view of escaping notice as much as possible, and also for the sake of warmth, went into the ladies' waiting-room, and sat by the fire.

One woman only occupied a seat in the room—a ruddy-faced, middle-aged woman, with a little girl playing about her knees.

They looked up as the new comer entered, and stared at her as persons of indifferent breeding always stare, meaning no harm, but displaying unassuming rudeness.

Ximena stopped, half-minded to retreat.

Then, smiling at her own fears, she advanced boldly, but quietly, and took a seat on the opposite side of the fire.

The mother and the child stared till they were tired, or till the stranger had ceased to be an object of curiosity; while the latter spread out her hands for the grateful warmth.

"It's a rough night, ma'am," the woman said, at length, in a deferential tone.

"Very—and very cold," was the answer.

"I've not found it particular cold, 'cept in the wind," said the woman.

"Indeed!" replied Ximena. Then she asked herself: "Am I ill, then, or is it some fearful presentiment that freezes the very blood in my veins?"

"You shiver, ma'am," said the woman.

"Yes, I've had a long walk—I'm afraid—afraid the cab was damp, I feel so chilly."

She had relapsed into thought as she spoke, and did not notice how contradictory her words were; but the woman did. Her sharp eyes told in a moment that the "long walk," and the "damp cab," had aroused her suspicion.

"What a pretty ring the lady has on her finger!" exclaimed the child—one of those restless, fidgety little ones, who see and hear everything.

She had.

It was a glittering diamond of the purest water, which in her trepidation she had forgotten to remove.

"Showy, isn't it?" she asked, answering the woman's eyes, which were fixed upon her suspiciously.

"And valuable too, I should say, ma'am?" the woman remarked.

"No. Imitation. But it's astonishing to what perfection they get these things now-a-days!"

She felt it incumbent on her to account, even to this stranger, for the discrepancy between this gem and her general appearance. Having done so, she turned aside to the child, as the readiest means of diverting attention from a subject that might be full of danger.

"Your's is a fine little girl," she remarked. "What is her age—five?"

"Oh, no, ma'am; scarcely four."

"Indeed!"

In flattering children, the rule is to reverse the assertions addressed to persons of maturer years. You flatter a lady by affecting to believe that she is younger than she is; a child by expressing incredulity at its alleged youth.

"And what is your name, dear?" asked Ximena, addressing the child.

"Miriam," was the answer.

Strange! It was the name of Ximena's sister—an uncommon name, too—and she started at hearing it from the child's lips.

"Miriam—what?" asked the mother, hastily.

"Miriam Snow."

A hasty glance at the woman's face betrayed Ximena's uneasiness. For she had not failed to recognize the second name. She knew Luke Snow, the gipsy trader, well enough. Remembered the time he came courting her sister Miriam, who refused him; but whose name he had, clearly enough, given to his child. Remembered, too, yet more vividly, that it was this man who had gone to Ingarstone with his tale of suspicion (as she had heard from Flacker), and had induced him to undertake that fruitless mission to the Home Secretary.

Surely there was a fatality in all this! It struck like cold to the woman's heart that there was, but she struggled hard to conceal her alarm.

"I hope Miriam is a good child?" she asked, faintly.

"Pretty well—pretty well, as little girls go," said the mother, glancing at her in the pride of her heart.

"You see, ma'am," she added, "we're about the

country, my husband and me, too much for us to keep a tight hand over the children. When they're some- times here and sometimes there, and maybe ridin' in a week by the time, there's no doin' much with them. My husband's a sort o' horse-dealer, and a general dealer, for the matter o' that; for he buys most things, and he goes about to fairs and markets, and the like, and I go with him when I can."

"And the children?"

"Well, one or other o' 'em. There's five in all. And this is his favourite one, this is, and goes with us mostly. 'Bring little Miriam,' he says, jest as we was starting; 'it'll do her good;' but my belief is, it does him more good to have her with him. It's time he was here, too, talking o' that," the woman abruptly added.

"It is late," said Ximena, looking up at a clock in the room, and glad of any pretext for escaping. Then, nodding to the mother, and patting little Miriam on the cheek, she tottered out of the room.

"What an escape!" she gasped. "He would know me in a moment!"

She darted to the ticket-place, asked for a ticket for Dover, clutched it eagerly, paid the money in such a nervous, unsteady manner that the clerk thought she had been drinking, and then stole out toward the platform.

In going, she could not resist the temptation to glance through the partly-open door of the waiting-room.

A broad-shouldered man, with a rough fur cap, stood before the fire, talking to the ruddy-faced woman, and holding little Miriam by the hand.

It was enough. White and trembling, the fugitive sped on, and out to the platform, where the train was already formed up. Several guards loitered about, but none of them took much notice of her. She wondered why, for the moment. Then she recollected that her dress was mean and shabby, and was not at all likely to excite the curiosity of guard or porter.

"Can you put me into a reserved compartment?" she asked, addressing the first official she met.

"Don't reserve none but first class," he returned, brusquely.

She showed her ticket, and slipped a shilling into his hand.

"First class? I beg y'r pardon, ma'am," he exclaimed in a thoroughly altered tone. "This way, if you please."

And he opened a door.

"Shall I have this to myself? Can I make sure of not being disturbed if I sleep?" Ximena asked.

"You may make sure of having no gentleman let in," the man said. "That's as far as we can go."

She thanked him, stepped in, and the door was closed.

Her first impulse was to draw down the blinds; but, on second thoughts, she desisted, as it might excite suspicion. The only precaution she took was to sit immediately under the lamp, so that her face was thrown into deep shadow.

It wanted now but a few minutes of the starting of the train. How interminable they seemed! The passengers came slowly along—the porters' trucks rattled slowly down; even the cabs seemed to arrive at a snail's pace. Everything had grown suddenly slow. Surely the train was late? What could they be waiting for? It was unpardonable that a train designed to catch a boat should be late in starting. She had just said this, when the clock struck—ten!

They were not late, after all, then; but how horribly slow the time was going!

"Any more for Dover?"

The voice was close to the carriage—it was the voice of the man she had given the shilling to.

And while he was asking the welcome question, which showed they were about to start, some one came up and spoke to him. It was a man. She heard his voice. What was that he was saying?

"—a ladylike sort of a woman, in a shabby dress?"

"A sort o' frightened way, had she?"

"Yes."

"As if she'd done something wrong?"

"Just so."

"Well, I've no right to say; but—in there."

"Then, look here. Open this next door—I'll pay the difference."

All this passed clearly and distinctly audible to the woman, sitting alone, in her terror; and she knew that the second speaker—he who had described her so accurately—was Luke Snow!

He was after her, then!

In the same carriage—in the very next compartment; perhaps able to see her face through the aperture in which the lamp hung!

Terrified at the bare thought, she shifted her seat to that opposite her, and as she did so, the train started.

No one could enter the carriage now until the train

stopped at its first station. That was a comfort. But when it did reach that station, or some future station, what was to prevent Snow presenting himself at the door, armed, who could tell with what authority? He might have a warrant for her arrest. And even if he suffered her to reach Dover in safety, he might produce such a document, and secure her before she could get on board the vessel.

These fears grew and grew upon her.

She cursed the mischance which had led her into that waiting-room, where she had betrayed herself. Next, she questioned whether this Luke Snow had not dogged her steps from the first? Perhaps in Ingarstone's pay? Perhaps in Cecil's? If this was so, what chance had she of escape?

Terror begets terror. Of all the faculties of the mind, this is the most unreasonable. It runs away with the judgment, and only results in panic.

The swift motion of the train, as it passed onward, seemed maddening.

The incessant clangour accompanying it acted on the brain of the terrified woman, exciting and goading her, and all the while adapting itself as an accompaniment to the words which kept ringing in her ears—the words of the poet:

The horrid thing pursues my soul—
It stands before me now!

Worked up to a pitch of desperation, she drew towards the window, cowering and shrinking as she did so, and looked out.

They were rushing through a tunnel.

On the brick side of it, close to the carriages, there was a reflection of that dreaded next compartment, bright and distinct, and in the midst the shadow of a man looking anxiously out—a man wearing the fur cap which was so unmistakable.

Had any doubts remained in her mind, this put an end to them. Snow was there—in the next compartment—and on the watch!

"What shall I do? what shall I do?" was the exclamation that kept forming itself on Ximena's lips, now livid with overwhelming horror. "I am a coward to-night. Why is it? I've faced danger before. Why shouldn't I now? Who is this man? What right has he to watch me and control my actions? Why shouldn't I confront him boldly, and defy him to lay a finger on me without a warrant? I will—no, no. I can't. I'm weaker than a child to-night. God! It is there still. The shadow on the wall! Heaven have mercy on me. I am a lost woman!"

With this exclamation, she slid from the seat on to the ground; and kneeling there, pressed her hands together on her breast in an agony of despair, out of which she strove in vain to argue herself.

The dark, over-hanging presentiment of the last few hours had grown dense and overpowering. The nameless horror which had weighed upon her heart no longer seemed in the far-distance; it was close, it shut her in, it crushed her down, and drove her to the verge of madness.

In the midst of all—rising up like a bright ray out of the utter darkness—a way of escape suddenly presented itself.

With a cry, she rose to her feet.

"Why did I not think of this before?" she asked, unconsciously aloud. "The thing is so easy, and the result so sure. As the train nears the first station they will put on the break, and slacken speed. The door is unlocked—good! I have only to turn the handle, to watch my time, and spring boldly out. In an instant I shall be lost in the darkness of those black, outspreading fields, and my escape will be certain. There is no danger—little or no danger; and the risk is for life."

Arguing thus, she seated herself on the side of the carriage opposite that at which the shadow of the fur-cap was visible, and furtively thrusting out a hand, turned the handle of the door.

It would have swung open; but she held it to by the strap which raised the window.

Held it, and waited with caught-up breath.

Held it, till there was a glow of light in the distance, and there came the harsh grinding of the guard's break, and the slackening of speed was clearly perceptible.

Then she let the door fly open; but yet waited one other second in her weakness and irresolution.

Only a second; and then, with a desperate resolve, she rose and dashed from the carriage.

There was a momentary whirl of a woman's garments, followed by a shrill scream.

CHAPTER LIX.

MONDAY MORNING.

My life is over ere my days are done,
For I have looked my last upon the sun.

ANON.

WHILE this wretched woman was speeding toward the sea, pursued by the furies in the shape of her own fears, and resolving on her desperate leap for life, a

gloomy scene was enacting in the country town seven miles from Ingarstone.

In that town the most conspicuous object was the county goal, a hideous brick building, surrounded by a brick wall thirty feet in height, strengthened at intervals with stone buttresses.

The front of the prison looked on to an open green.

There the market was held on alternate Mondays; and the prisoners in their cells were accustomed to hear, after midnight on Sunday, the lowing of oxen and the bleating of sheep, driven thither by lantern-light.

But to-night it was another sound which forced its way through the grim walls, and woke them out of their slumbers, filling their hearts with a strange sense of awe.

Few had heard that sound before, yet all knew what it meant, knew in a moment; recognizing it with an inward shudder.

"They are at work at it," said warder, meeting warder.

"Yes."

"They'll have it up by five, eh?"

"Before that."

The listening prisoners overheard, and knew well what it was to which these words referred.

The noise which had just reached them was heavy and lumbering, as of masses of timber thrown to the ground; it was succeeded by the noise of hammers, busily used in driving nails, and sounding in the prison cells like an undertaker at his work. Then came a fresh sound, at first low and scarcely audible; but swelling at last to an overwhelming force—the sound of the voices and footsteps of a gathering crowd.

Was it necessary that one of those whose ears these sounds reached—muffled and deadened by the prison walls—should be informed that the day now dawning was the last that the condemned Timothy Holt was to pass on earth, or that the unusual agitation about the goal was consequent on the raising of the gallows and the gathering of the spectators. Depend on it, no such information was necessary.

And Tim Holt himself—what of him?

The chaplain, arriving in the grey gusty dawn, asked that question, in his hard way, of the governor who was already stirring.

"Asleep, sir," was the laconic answer.

"Asleep!"

Yes; heaven is very merciful, and extends its blessings even to the guilty criminal. In this hour, when all the prison woke, and held its breath in mute horror of what was about to happen, the condemned lay wrapped in unconscious slumber.

The present had passed away from his over-taxed brain.

He was no longer a prisoner, watching the moments that brought nearer and nearer the hour of shame and suffering. He was a boy, roaming free in the fields and in the woods of Ingarstone. It was a glorious day, full of sunshine, too full almost, for the light blinded him, and he lay in the long grass, that was so cool and fragrant, and tried to shade his eyes with his arms. But if it was dazzling out there, how delicious it would be in the green shade of the wood! And with the thought, he had started up, twenty companions, as gay and restless as himself, bounding about him, and they were off, with shouts and laughter of uncontrolled delight, toward the familiar covert, where the branches blotted out the blue sky, and the ferns were waist deep; but where the nuts grew, for all that. Nuts! Surely there had never been such a crop in Ingarstone woods before! The trees were heavy with them, bending, breaking with the glorious store. How ripe they were, and what a pleasant smell they had! And see, see—the branches were alive with squirrels, with their restless brown backs, their bright eyes, and their whisking tails! Who would be after them? He, for one. The trees were easy to climb, and he mounted and mounted, higher and higher, the squirrels dodging him in their merry way. He would have them for all that. But what a height he had mounted! He looked down through the green mists, and saw that the rays of the setting sun were striking through the wood, red and bright, and, as he looked, they illuminated the face of a woman, who was rushing madly forward. The face was visible for an instant, and for an instant only; but he recognized it, and, with a shrill cry, shouted, "It is she! It is the murderer!"

Uttering that cry, he awoke.

A dull light was stealing into the condemned cell. By his side sat the chaplain, grim and indelible. At his feet, a warder was reading a newspaper by the light of a bull's-eye, which he held in one hand.

The horrible reality of his situation broke at once upon the mind of the unhappy youth.

"Have you slept well?" asked the chaplain.

"Yes, thank heaven; but—"

"You awake to a horrible reality of your own making."

Holt looked at him indignantly. "You've no right to tell me that," he said. "I am an innocent man; and you have no right to take advantage of your position by assuming that I am a guilty one. The innocent have been condemned before now, and have died protesting their innocence, as I shall."

"You had best prepare yourself for what is about to happen," said the chaplain.

"I will—in silence," was the prisoner's reply. It was the misfortune of this chaplain, as it is of so many filling similar positions, that he had no power of gaining access to the hearts of those he approached. He came with his rigid face and wooden voice, in which there was no ring of sympathy, talked to them in the jargon of theologians, commanding them to confess their sins, believe and be saved—having no idea of winning them to those results. Hence it followed that, as a rule, they revolted against his commands, or only complied with them under the influence of mortal terror.

No such terror filled Tim Holt's breast. He shrank, as every man must shrink, from the ignominy of his position, and the pain of a death of torture; but a martyr-like feeling sustained him, and made a hero of him even in that dark hour.

There was only one direction which he dared not let his thoughts take.

Instinctively he shunned all thought of his brother and of poor Janet Leeson. That final interview had completely unmanned him, and his only course now—if he would pass through the ordeal as became an innocent man—was to busy his thoughts with any and every trifle, rather than permit those loved images to engage them.

Janet's pale, pleading face was ever looking into his; and Curly's voice rang in his ears as it demanded if he was indeed innocent; but toward these phantoms he turned a frown of stony indifference.

It was his only chance—the only thing that could save him from playing the coward and so disgracing himself.

The grey of the November morning was still dense, and a fog penetrated even the prison, when they brought the prisoner his breakfast—his last meal.

A lantern light enabled him to see it, and to perceive that it was a little better than the ordinary prison fare. For this consideration he was indebted to the governor; and the mark of kindness, perhaps of sympathy, touched him deeply. He would have said as much; but there were tears in his eyes, and a choking sensation in his throat, which warned him not to speak.

So he sat and ate his meal, as he best could, red-eyed and silent.

All this while there surged around the prison a great sea of hungry spectators, gathered from all corners of the county, and even from distant parts, all restlessly anxious for the coming hour, and the horror it was to bring with it. In the midst of this wide ocean the galleys rose hardly higher or more conspicuous than the hull of a vessel, foundering after a storm.

From this surging multitude there rose a perpetual murmur, rising and sinking, but incessant; and this, borne into the prison, was distinctly audible to the wretched convict as he ate and drank. It was not the sort of music calculated to stimulate the appetite; but it excited his imagination almost to a pitch of horror beyond endurance. By its aid he realised the hideous concourse he was so soon to face. He could see their up-turned, pitiless, revengeful, cursing faces. And, then, the part he was himself to play, struck him with a reality that made him shudder.

"You are faint?" asked the chaplain, perceiving that his colour faded.

"No," he gasped, "I shall be better soon. How goes the time?"

The governor answered.

"It wants an hour to the time," he said.

"So long?"

It was a strange question, but it expressed his feeling exactly. Now that all hope was gone, and the end was inevitable, he dreaded nothing so much as the weary hour to be spent—in dreading.

Besides, he distrusted himself.

At that moment he had firmness, he had courage, he felt that he could have walked proud and erect to death. But he mistrusted his power of sustaining that feeling; and of all things his greatest horror was lest he might break down, and become weak and childish with terror, lest he might make a cowardly spectacle of himself, and so give the lie to that assertion of innocence which he had maintained throughout.

He was sitting thus, listening intently, as, by a sort of fascination, he felt compelled to do, to the raging of those human waves, that tossed and foamed about the prison, when the door of the cell abruptly opened, and two warders entered—a man walking between them.

It was an old man, with his grey head bowed lower than his shoulders, and he advanced with tottering and spasmodic steps.

The condemned did not see his face; nor did he need to do so. One glance told him who it was, and his heart bounded with tumultuous joy at the recognition.

"Father!" he shouted, rushing forward and falling at the old man's feet.

It was, indeed, Morris Holt. The struggle which had brought him there had been of a nature which only men of his iron character ever know. The barriers of his pride were adamant. They had resisted tears, pleadings, reproaches, every influence from without. But they had been secretly undermined. A voice deep down in his own heart had waited day and night, "He is your son! He is your own son!" He had resisted it long and steadily; but when his wife went and left him desolate, and the wailing voice, changing its tones, cried ever, "She loved him—she thought him guilty, but she loved him to the last!" what could he answer?

In the dead of that night he had risen from his pillow, wet with tears—had stolen, unknown to all, out of the cottage, out of the village, and was here, here in the prison, sobbing on the neck of his heart-broken son.

"You forgive me, father?" pleaded poor Tim.

There was no answer, only broken sobs.

"For all the sorrow I've brought you—not meaning it—I've asked God to forgive me, and you—you won't refuse me—"

"You did it, Tim!" cried the father, with a sudden effort.

"No! As I am a dying man!"

Morris Holt raised himself to his full height. The very demon of pride seemed to possess him, and he half-turned from his kneeling son.

"Father!" shrieked the desperate boy, springing up and throwing himself on his parent's breast. "I can suffer death; but I cannot lie. I am innocent!"

As he uttered these words, in the agonizing frenzy of the moment, his overwrought strength suddenly failed him; he reeled and staggered back, and it was only his father's arms that saved him from falling.

"He has swooned!" cried the officials, gathering round.

Morris Holt did not speak; but kneeling down, he raised his son's head, with spasmodic eagerness, and rested it on his own knee. Then, as they brought water and vinegar, he applied both restoratives with a woman's tenderness. As he did this, the prison surgeon entered, and then—apparently fearing lest his son would be removed—Holt covered over the inanimate body, with a cry of agony which touched all hearts.

It was at this moment that there was a sudden change in the monotonous raging of the human sea about the prison walls.

Something had happened.

One word seemed slapping itself on thousands of human lips; but it was inaudible in the condemned cell.

(To be continued.)

TRACES OF AN ANCIENT BRITISH TOWN NEAR EDINBURGH.—In the vicinity of the "Cat Stane," about six miles from Edinburgh, and near Craigleith, the traces of an ancient town have been discovered by Professor Simpson. Accompanied by Dr. Macbean and Mr. Hutchinson, he made an extensive and systematic investigation, the result of which was that they exposed portions of the faces of the three lines of walls, and one of the raised circles inside. They also were fortunate enough to discover a gate which had formed one of the entrances to the encampment. The ramparts are arranged in a fortified manner, as parallels, and towards that part of the hill from which alone any attack could be made, the other sides presenting natural barriers which, in those times, no invading force could have hoped to overcome. Excavations were made behind an old stone kist, which would seem to have been placed just outside the city walls, but nothing of interest was found there.

MR. BAKER, THE AFRICAN TRAVELLER.—Sir Roderick Murchison has received from Mr. Petherick a letter, dated June 8, containing the following information respecting an old and esteemed correspondent, Mr. S. W. Baker:—"I have had several interviews with Hharshid Aga's men, from the interior of Gondokoro. They unite in their statements of having accompanied Mr. Baker to Kamrasi's residence, where they had met with a good reception; that Mr. Baker was in excellent health, but that he had lost the whole of his cattle, and had been training bullocks for riding. From this point all agree that Mr. Baker and his ten men, under the guidance of a confidential person of the chief, left to inspect a lake, but thenceforth the stories told by the men are conflicting. Some say he went to the Lutu Nigri, while others maintain that he left for the Lake Nyanza, and that he did not intend to return, but to proceed onward to Zanzibar. It is, I fear, but little light that is in my power to

throw upon his movements, but of the two versions I am more inclined to give credit to the first—viz. his journey to the Lutu Nigri. From what I have been able to glean by cross-questioning, I am disposed to think that Mr. Baker intended to have returned to Kamrasi, in order to join the trading party on their return journey, or he would have consigned letters to them respecting his future requirements from Khartoum, as also for posting letters at this place for Europe. Ten men of Hharshid Aga remained stationary, while the majority, with the proceeds of their trade, went to Gondokoro, there to be reinforced, for the purpose of returning to form a permanent trading establishment at Kamrasi's residence. I have stated in my last that these men conveyed a packet of letters from Gondokoro to Mr. Baker; but, pleading want of porters, they refused to take charge of sundry provisions I had sent hence for his consumption. From these men Mr. Baker will have learnt the departure of the boats from Gondokoro, and their absence during the rainy season; therefore, until the next trading campaign, nothing more can be heard of him."

THE BATH SOUP KITCHENS.

At the head of the establishment in Clatham Row, Walcot, and at the seven branch establishments distributed about the city, there is an uniform tariff of prices; one penny the half-pint, and so on, when paid by the working man himself, which price is doubled when the expenditure is made in tickets, to be given away as charity. And the society especially begs that purchasers will not distribute these tickets promiscuously to beggars, but to the needy and deserving poor of the town.

Any one who considers how extremely difficult it is for a poor labouring man, or even a respectable mechanic, to get a hot, wholesome, well-cooked dinner at all, will understand that it was a satisfactory sight, on this bitter winter noon, to see those long lines of decent-looking men eating their steaming portions of a clean, tidy board.

A cheap dinner—a penny bowl of soup and a half-penny roll—and yet it was substantial enough for any man's need—any gentleman's, either. "I assure you," said a very civil personage, who looked like a cook in his white apron and sleeves, but received with an air of dignity and authority which betokened something higher, "I assure you, many a colonel and general have been here and made their dinners of it and declared they never wished to dine better, and only hoped they might never dine worse." In which sentiment, having tasted the soup, we heartily agreed with those respected military officers.

The interior working of soup kitchens is pretty well known—this of Bath is like most others. Meat is procured daily from six or seven of the most respectable butchers of the city, cut up in fragments, mixed with vegetables, and thrown into the great boilers which, during the winters of 1861-2, engulphed—how much, think you?—11,433 lb. of beef, 3½ sacks of onions, 107½ sacks of peas, and of salt more than a ton. Out of this material, how many a hungry mouth must have been filled, and how many a busy workman sent cheerily back to work all the better fitted to earn the family bread. And if, in truth, the nearest way to a man's heart—not to say his conscience—is through his stomach, the police-sheets of the Bath magistrates may have been lightened according as these soup-boilers were filled and emptied. They are, the attendant told us, emptied every day, and newly supplied with fresh meat and vegetables, lest the poor should imagine—as they are so prone to do—"Oh, anything is thought good enough for us."

At this head kitchen all the soup is made, and thence distributed, in enormous cans, to the various branch depôts. People can either consume it on the spot, or carry it away with them. Last winter, from November, 1862, to April, 1863, the consumption was 73,080 quarts, and the number of consumers was 36,339—average 800 per diem; the greatest number who ever came in one day being 568. The receipts across the counter amounted to 90,945 penny pieces—that is, £378 18s. 9d.—while £163 19s. was realised by the sale of tickets for benevolent distribution. This combined sum is more than sufficient to defray all expenses, and, with the addition of subscriptions and donations, has enabled the committee to lay by a savings-bank fund for future expenses.—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

LONGEVITY OF AUTHORS.—The late Mr. Symonds, in a leading article, says that writers are a short-lived race; but the *Paris Circular* maintains otherwise, and writes:—"Some prejudiced people still maintain the notion that the cultivation of all literature militates against longevity, that boon all men desire, though they make every effort to anticipate death by killing time by games, excursions, and sleep. Show me a list of farmers who have attained more advanced years

than these slaves of the lamp. M. Vinnet is 87 years old; M. de Segur, 85; M. de Barante, 82; M. Dupin, the elder, 80; M. Lebrun, 70; M. Guizot, 77; the Duke of Broglie, 74; M. de Lamartine, 76; M. Villemin, 74; M. Berryer, 74; M. de Pongerville, 72; M. Victor Cousin, 72; M. Patin, 71; M. Plourens, 70; M. Mignet, 68; M. Thiers, 67; M. de Remusat, 67. All of these gentlemen are members of the French Academy, and, with the exception of M. de Pongerville (and even he has looked quite as old and infirm for the last twenty years), all of them are hale and hearty."

THE DIAMOND-SEEKER.

CHAPTER XVI PIZARRO.

It was with a serious purpose that José Pizarro again turned his face towards the wilderness of the upper Parahita.

The more he had reflected upon the mysterious interview he had had with Berta de Paos, the more deeply had his feelings been enlisted in her favour. Returning by rail to Valencia, he went direct to Dos Eira, and in this latter place provided himself with a couple of stout mules, a broad-shouldered muleteer, provisions enough to last him and his man a week, arms and ammunition, and various other articles necessary to his proposed expedition.

The boat he and Bavao had hired of the innkeeper's friend was safe, and he had no difficulty in finding a man to take it up to the vicinity of the islands, where he had encountered Berta. Pizarro was too sagacious to betray to his friends the purpose which occupied his thoughts, and also too crafty, on the other hand, to make any movement which could possibly be interpreted by the keepers of Berta, if reported to them, as a menace against them.

Proceeding with due caution and secrecy in all his plans, he found himself, on the third day after leaving our hero, comfortably settled in the heart of an untraversed and almost impenetrable wilderness, within two miles of the spot where he had met Berta.

Thus prepared for business, the Spaniard was not long in getting to work.

The first part of his task was to find the building in which the count and his daughter were confined, and in this step he was completely successful, after a few hours of careful reconnoitring.

It stood on a little knoll, a quarter of a mile from the shore on which his interview with the fair captive had taken place.

It was a small structure, a storey and a half high, built of wood, and having nothing to distinguish it from the generality of houses in the provinces, except that the low and narrow windows were guarded by massive grates of iron.

"So, that is the poor girl's prison," was the comment of Pizarro, a view of it exciting all the chivalry of his nature. "All silent around it—no signs of life visible—truly its appearance is a full confirmation of her sad story!"

The place of Berta's imprisonment having been found, it remained for Pizarro to find some means of communicating with her, provided she was still there. In the hope of seeing her, he passed nearly all the afternoon in the vicinity, hiding in the woods immediately around her prison; but he was disappointed. Once or twice he saw a rough-looking man going to a neighbouring spring and returning, and attending to a couple of horses in a shed behind the house, but not a sign of Berta was discovered.

"It must be that her escape and her interview with me the other night have aroused the utmost vigilance of her jailors," he said, in tones of mingled indignation and sorrow. "Perhaps she is at this moment kept in close confinement! The night shall not pass," he added, with additional energy, "until I know just how the case stands!"

The presence of the man he had seen indicated that the prisoners were still there, and not carried further into the wilderness; and this circumstance was a satisfaction and encouragement to him.

As soon as the shadows of twilight began to descend upon the scene, the watcher commenced creeping towards the house. He was soon sufficiently near to hear the voices of the men inside, and to see one of them occasionally moving about near the door, and once he even felt assured that he heard the tones of Berta remonstrating with the ruffians. As the darkness grew more and more intense, he crept nearer and nearer to the building, and at length secreted himself in a clump of flowering shrubs within a couple of rods of the house.

Here he had a long and most anxious watch.

He continued to hear the voices of the two overseers of whom Berta had spoken, and at last beheld

them come out of the door and seat themselves near the steps, continuing the conversation in which they had before been engaged.

"I tell you what it is, Gorro," said one of them, in a low tone, with the air of a man who has arrived at a final conclusion, "I do not know whether these people are really insane or not, nor do I care. What I do know is that we get twice as much pay for taking care of them as we could make in any other manner, and for that reason I am bound to continue their keeper a few years longer, to say the least."

"Them's my sentiments exactly," responded his companion, "and that settles the whole matter. They merely waste their breath, as we have often told them, by imploring us to release them!"

The face of Bavao flushed with indignation, as he listened to these words, and he made an involuntary movement which nearly betrayed him. He saw that the two villains were pretty well satisfied that their prisoners were not insane, and felt, more urgently than ever, the necessity of instantly rescuing the count and Berta from their horrible situation.

For half-an-hour the two men sat near the doorway, smoking and conversing, while the old negress Pizarro had seen was heard bustling about inside the house. At last they entered, closing and locking the door, and soon after the rattling of manacles was heard, as if they were securing their prisoner for the night. Pizarro did not move or utter a word at all these indications of their cruelty, for he comprehended that all the force at his present command could not make a successful attack upon the strongly built structure and its ruffianly defenders. He clearly saw that patience and secrecy must be his auxiliaries in the work before him.

In the course of half-an-hour from the time of the entrance of the two men into the house, all became still within doors.

"They have retired for the night," he thought; "the two prisoners, the negress, and those two ruffians! Now what can I do?"

He revolved this question in his mind, viewing the situation of affairs in every light. Waiting another half-hour, during which all remained quiet around him, he crept up on his hands and knees to the entrance of the building, and placed his ear at the bottom of the door.

He distinctly heard the sound of breathing; but all else was silent.

A gratified expression passed over his face.

He waited at least another half hour, watching and listening, and repeatedly passing around the building. By this time the full darkness of the night had come to his assistance.

"The time has now come for an exploration," he thought, as he paused under the solitary window of the upper story. "She spoke of having weakened one of the windows, and this must be the one. It is likely that she occupies this part of the building."

With these thoughts passing in his mind, he looked around for the means of ascending to the window in question. He examined the little shed, where the horses were feeding, but saw nothing of a ladder, or anything else calculated to assist him.

"It is clear that I must climb up to that window," he repeated to himself, as he again halted under it, in a quandary; "but how?"

He made another circuit of the building, and this time noticed a small wood-pile near it, the sight of which gave him relief. He speedily selected several stout poles, and bore them to the scene of operations, embedding one end of each into the yielding soil, and leaning the other at different elevations against the house. Two or three times he made some noise in these movements, and, at length, he grew terribly anxious lest he should be discovered.

Again he paused in his proceedings, listening intently, and summoning all his sagacity to the aid of the enterprise upon which he had entered. As all continued to remain still within the building, he loosened his knife and pistols in his belt, and commenced his ascent on the poles to the window, proceeding with all possible caution.

They moved some under his weight, and the task was exceedingly difficult to effect in silence, but he finally reached the uppermost one, steadying himself thereon by leaning against the house; and the next instant he secured a firm hold of one of the iron bars guarding the window, and raised his head to the level of the sash, standing erect.

Thus far his resolute proceedings had been favoured, and he now breathed freer.

All remained silent around him.

"Thank God!" was the unspoken thought which arose in his heart. "This gives me new hope!"

A moment later, as he bent his ear towards the room, the window inside the bars being open, he distinctly heard the low and calm respiration of a sleeper. His heart thrilled with such delight at this discovery that he was momentarily unable to proceed.

CHAPTER XVII

BERTA.

Until this moment the Spaniard had worked more in despair than in hope.

He had even doubted whether Berta was in the house.

But as that low and regular breathing reached his ears, through the open window, a flush of joy mantled his face, his hands trembled with eagerness, and his heart quickened its beatings to such an extent that he feared its throbs would betray him.

He felt convinced that the sleeper was the object of his search.

Having advanced so far in his enterprise, the next step was to attract Berta's attention without raising an alarm. The darkness was so intense in the building that he could not see any object in the room, and he realized, with sufficient vividness, how decidedly he was exposing himself to a deadly shot or thrust if the keepers of Berta should chance to be apprised in any way of his presence.

For several moments he clung to his precarious support, trying to peer into the room, before he made up his mind how to proceed. He reflected that the negress he had seen was quite as likely to answer any whisper he might utter as Berta, and a simple reflection upon the great interests involved in his success or defeat was sufficient to retain him temporarily in the most thrilling suspense.

What was his best course?"

If he had canvassed the question under merely earthly considerations, he would have been at a loss how to decide it. He eventually remembered how clearly providential his meeting with Berta had been, and the remembrance gave him faith to hope that the same merciful power was still directing his actions. Attaining a conviction that he would be successful if he proceeded with caution, he placed his face close to the iron bars, and softly called:

"Berta!"

There was a quick—almost convulsive—rustling of garments within the room, and the regular breathing he had heard was suspended, a strange and oppressive silence succeeding. He felt assured that the sleeper had suddenly awakened, and was holding her breath in the intensity of the hopes with which she was listening for a repetition of the name.

"I must take the chances," thought Pizarro. "It is clear that my presence here is known."

Acting upon the conviction, he again called:

"Berta! Berta!"

Again a slight rustling sound reached the ears of Pizarro, as if the late sleeper were arising, and then all was as still as the grave.

In the hope that the poor captive had really heard her name uttered, and that she was now listening for further developments—unable to decide whether she had really heard the call or conceived that she heard it—he again pressed his face against the cold bars and whispered:

"It is your friend, Berta. This way, to the window!"

The very silence which succeeded this announcement told Pizarro that Berta had heard him. He comprehended that she sat just before him, with her hand clasped to her heart, her breathing nearly suspended, and her whole soul convulsed by the wild hopes which that whisper had aroused.

At last, when it seemed to Pizarro as if an age had passed, a small white hand was thrust between the bars and convulsively grasped his arm.

"I am here," she said, in a choking sort of whisper that almost died away on her lips—"oh, God of Mercy! I am here!"

Pizarro extended his unemployed hand towards her, between the bars; and, as she knelt beside the window, she pressed it to her cheek, bathing it with tears.

"Oh, you have come!" she finally murmured, and then there was another pause, she being unable to say more.

"Yes, I am here to save you," the Spaniard responded. "Where is that negress?"

"Lying at the door of this room, not ten feet from me, asleep."

"On the inside?"

"No, on the outside."

"Will she hear us?"

"Perhaps not—I trust not, if we are cautious. The door is between us, and I think there is no question about her being asleep."

"Good. How have you been since I saw you? and how is your father?"

"We have been terribly treated since I saw you," was her reply. "The overseers were angry because I effected my escape and communicated with a stranger, and I have not left the house since. As to my poor father, he has been loaded more heavily with chains than ever!"

Pizarro was excited beyond measure by these revelations.

"But I have not been hopeless," Berta continued, with a firmer tone than she had heretofore used. "I have had faith in your promise of assistance, and have been sleeplessly awaiting you during the two past nights. I was merely in a doze, owing to utter exhaustion, at the moment of your coming."

The grand faith Berta had reposed in him touched him, and he replied:

"I am ready to lay down my life in your service. I have thought of you continually since our strange meeting."

"And I have thought daily and hourly of you. I told my father all the circumstances of our interview, and, as he knew your father by his honourable reputation, he has regarded my meeting with you as a mark of divine favour, and it has been his chief consolation ever since. Oh! if you could aid us to regain our liberty, he would bless you for ever, as I do."

"I will do anything in my power. Are your gaolers asleep at this moment?"

"Yes. They sleep soundly, as a general thing, so strongly is my father ironed, and so great their consequent assurance of his safety. But they are armed with knives and pistols, and have sworn that they will kill him if an attempt is made to rescue him."

"The villains! If I can once gain their presence, placing myself between them and the count, I would teach them a lesson. Have you thought of any plan of effecting a rescue?"

"Yes, of a great many. This is the window from which I escaped the night I saw you. I loosened two of these bars in the masonry, at the bottom, so that I could turn them aside and pass through. Our cruel gaolers have repaired the damage, and have watched me more closely than before, so that I have had no opportunity of making further efforts for my freedom."

"These bars, then, are as strong as ever?" questioned Pizarro, endeavouring to shake them.

"Yes—that is to say, they appear to be; but the places they repaired must be weaker than they were before; and I think the bars might be prised apart, or even broken, if we could get at them with a lever."

"I suppose one of your gaolers has the key of the door in his pocket, so that we cannot think of entrance in that quarter. Let me see!" and he ran his hand over the gates, noting their size. "The bottom of these bars are imbedded in brick and mortar!"

"Yes, yes. The house was built in some haste, and with rather scanty resources, so that these gates were not so firmly fixed in the wall as they would have otherwise been."

"All this is in our favour. I think I can spring the bars apart, and possibly loosen them in the wall, at the bottom, with a stout piece of wood. Wait a moment, and see if any of your enemies are stirring, while I go for the lever."

He slipped down to the ground, and hurried away to the wood-pile in silence, selecting such a piece of wood as he wanted. He was soon back at the window.

"It's fortunate for us that it is not a regular prison," he whispered. "There are no cross bars; all run in one direction."

"I have listened at the door," rejoined Berta, "and they all appear to be asleep. But we must be cautious—as secret as the grave."

Pizarro placed the wood between two of the bars, near the sill, and then whispered:

"Kneel before the window, Berta, and hold your apron in front of the masonry, where the bars enter it; so that, if we should break it up, the fragments will not rattle upon the floor."

Berta did as desired; and then, with the exercise of all his strength, Pizarro endeavoured to spring the bars apart. At the second or third trial one of them gave way, and the loosened brick and mortar rattled into Berta's apron, and even upon the floor.

"Hush!" she whispered, in an agony of alarm lest the noise had been heard by the negroes or the overseers. "If discovered, we are lost!"

They waited in silence during a brief interval, while Pizarro felt the wall and the bars, in order to form some idea of the results of his efforts.

"With one more of them loosened," he whispered, with increased hope, "I shall be able to effect an entrance."

He was too anxious and excited to make any unnecessary delay. Applying himself to the task, he speedily triumphed, loosening another of the bars, and so making an aperture large enough to admit him. When he and Berta had realized this success, they could hardly restrain their joy.

"You can now enter?"

"Yes, heaven be praised!"

It required his utmost strength and agility to draw himself up to the narrow aperture, and to squeeze himself through it, but he soon stood beside Berta.

"It is now life against life," he whispered, "and we will not die without a struggle."

Berta's heart felt a thrill of hope it had not known for years, as she marked the determination expressed in his voice.

"How shall we proceed?" she asked. "My father is heavily loaded with irons, and could not be moved without a great noise. On the other hand, as cruelly as they have treated us, we cannot creep up beside them and kill them in their sleep."

"No, Berta. I have no wish to kill them—only to conquer. Do you ever visit the count in the night, to soothe and console him when he is wakeful? Does he ever come up here to see you?"

Berta started at these inquiries, and could hardly control the feelings of relief which came over her.

"Yes, we often visit each other, at all hours," she replied. "I think I could call him up here now, in a moment, as he is not so manacled but that he can take short steps."

"Then that is our best course," replied Pizarro. "Our first measure is to get him with us."

"Yes, yes," rejoined Berta. "They will all be waked up by his movements, and will remain on the watch till he returns, if they do not follow him; but at least we can have him with us, and all die together, if death is to be our portion."

She opened the door leading below, and stepped to the head of the stairs, exclaiming, in moaning accents:

"Oh! cannot you come up a few moments, father? I am in the greatest agony."

"Are you sick, girl?" asked one of the overseers, awakening at the sound of her voice.

"Yes, deathly sick!" and her anxiety left her so faint that she leaned against the wall for support.

"Oh! father—"

She heard the clank of the nobleman's chains, as he arose to come to her, and she listened to learn if he would be prevented from coming.

"Don't you be up there half a minute," said the ruffian who had before spoken, "or I will be after you."

A moment of the most terrible suspense followed, to both Berta and Pizarro, as they heard the clanking of the count's chains, from step to step, as he made his way up the stairs as fast as his manacles would permit.

"What is the matter, my child?" he demanded, in a hollow voice, which needed not its present intonation of alarm to attest the terrible anguish he suffered.

"Are you ill?"

The next instant, as he passed through the door of the chamber, Berta seized his hand, giving it a warning pressure, and closed the door between him and his keepers.

"The friend is here of whom I told you," she whispered. "He has come to save us."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNT DE PAOS.

A THRILL of pleasure shot through the heart of José Pizarro as Berta placed his hand in that of her father.

The long pent-up sobs which burst from the girl, the wild hopes which suddenly flashed through the nobleman's mind, and the resolve of Pizarro to restore his new friends to their lost sphere, all made up a meeting of the most thrilling description.

"We have loosened the bars of the window," whispered Berta, "and can make our escape!"

The count had too little strength to bear the unexpected revelation with calmness, and he would have fallen to the floor if Pizarro had not assisted him to a seat.

"Yes, we have taken some step towards your release, count," said Pizarro; "and those scoundrels shall never regain possession of you while I am living."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" was all the overjoyed prisoner could say.

"What will those fellows do if we remain quiet here a few moments?" asked Pizarro. "I wonder if we cannot surprise them?"

"I think they will soon be up after me," said the count. "They will not let me be out of their sight a moment!"

He had scarcely uttered the words before the voice of the overseer was heard, calling upon the prisoner to return.

"Come back this instant!" he shouted, "or it will be the worse for you!"

"Make no reply," whispered Pizarro. "Remain seated where you are, count. Berta, you remain here; and he placed her beside her father. "Now then," and he took up his station at the door, "we are ready for the promised visit!"

He opened the door cautiously, and peered down the stairs.

The negroes were heard in low and earnest consultation with the overseers, and the rescuer very readily comprehended that they had a suspicion that something unusual was going on. A moment later, one of the men struck a light, and approached the stairs, half-dressed, and cursing at a terrible rate.

In utter silence, with an assuring pressure of the count's hand, Pizarro placed himself in waiting behind the door.

"What are you about up here?" demanded the ruffian, as he burst into the room, light in hand, and paused in front of father and daughter, while his bloodshot eyes and inflamed visage looked unutterable menaces. Did I not tell you to come back? You shall suffer!"

He paused abruptly, and an instant change came over his blustering and brutal manner. Pizarro had closed the door between the villain and his associates, and now stood with his back against it, pointing a pistol at the intruder's head.

"Dare to move or utter a word," he said, in a calm voice, "and I will stretch you dead upon the floor! It is madness for one to resist a dozen. Surrender!"

The villain glared upon him with the air of a trapped tiger, and then cast a rapid glance around the room.

"Surrender, eh?" he muttered, as he measured the slight figure of Pizarro. "I think my freedom too valuable to be given up without a struggle."

"Very well," replied Pizarro, with a cool smile; "let me see you struggle!"

He advanced a step nearer to the overseer, with an expression on his manly face which showed that he would fire at the slightest word or movement. The ruffian's air of dogged defiance soon gave place to consternation and terror, and he said:

"Enough, senor, I surrender!"

"Lie down, then!"

The man made a movement as if intending to drop the lamp he carried, but Pizarro gave him such a look, still covering him with his pistol, that he did not dare do so.

"Now, count, if you will hold the light," said the rescuer, passing it to him. "I will soon place it out of this man's power to do us any harm!"

He removed the ruffian's knives and pistols, and bound him hand and foot in the most thorough manner, with some cords furnished him by Berta.

Once assured that his dreaded enemy was subdued, the count said:

"This is the man who usually keeps the keys my iron. Perhaps he now has them in his possession!"

"No, no, I swear to you that I haven't them," the prisoner responded, as he inclined his ear towards the stairway. "You can search my pockets—"

"That is just what I intend to do," interrupted Pizarro, suiting the action to the words. "I think less of your word, in such a case as this, than of the evidence of my own senses!"

The count waited with the deepest anxiety, and nearly fainted with an excess of joyful emotions when Pizarro held up to his view a number of keys.

"Yes, yes, you have them," he murmured. "Thank God for this mercy! My limbs will now be freed from their shackles!"

It was a solemn and exciting moment to Pizarro and the late prisoners, as they devoted their attention to the removal of the chains. The years those irons had worn into the body and soul of the victim; the cruelities and hardships both he and Berta had endured; and the possible happiness to which they might yet attain, if they could only complete the work of liberation; all held them in breathless anxiety and suspense.

"These are evidently the keys," said Pizarro; "but I confess I am not familiar with their operation. You will have to show me, count, how to unlock your fetters!"

"I will," said Berta, with trembling eagerness. "I have often watched, with unutterable agony, the process of putting on the heaviest ones—those on his feet!"

While the trio were employed in the task, the bound and helpless overseer again turned his ear toward the door, as if he had heard something that attracted him. In fact, a look of pleasant surprise swept over his dark visage. Continuing to watch every moment of Pizarro and the count, he kept his attention fixed upon the door, as if assured that relief might suddenly come to him from that quarter.

"Let me try it," said Berta, seeing that Pizarro did not make very rapid progress. "Besides, you may as well keep an eye on our foes!"

At the very instant Pizarro relinquished the keys to Berta, and arose to his feet, the door leading below was opened an inch or two, and the associate of the prostrate overseer peered into the room. The thoughts and glances of the trio were so much absorbed in the work before them that they did not notice this stealthy reconnaissance.

"Now is your time," said the captured overseer, looking directly at Pizarro, but intending his words for his companion. "One bold effort will be sufficient!"

As Pizarro again fixed his eyes upon the operation of Berta, the chamber door was opened wide enough to admit the second ruffian. At the same instant the shackles fell from the feet of the Count de Pao, and a mutual exclamation of delight followed.

"One moment more," whispered Berta, almost wild with her emotions. "The hands—the hands."

She applied all her energies to the task, and the next instant the manacles fell from the hands and arms of her father.

He was free!

"Oh, my father, my father!" whispered the glad girl, as she threw herself into his arms. "We are saved! We can now make our escape!"

There was a sudden and heavy footstep, a savage yell of defiance, and the captured overseer was dragged out of the room in an instant.

His companion had taken advantage of that exciting moment, when the attention of the trio was occupied with the count's release, to rush forward and seize the prostrate ruffian by the collar, dragging him away.

This movement had been so suddenly executed that Pizarro was not able to prevent it.

"Ha, ha! all is not yet lost!" the overseer exclaimed to his fellow, as he hurried him down the stairs. "I have taken a sly look around the house, and there is only one man, I am sure, concerned in this rescue!"

"Only one!" cried the disgusted ruffian, as the old negro danced around him in a perfect frenzy of excitement. "Tut! me as quickly as possible, and we may yet set all to rights!"

(To be continued.)

GENERAL TOM THUMB.

We have seen a letter from Mr. Charles L. Stratton, "General Tom Thumb," announcing his intention of arriving in Liverpool in a few days, along with his diminutive, but pretty wife, and his son. He comes on a friendly visit, and not to exhibit himself. On his arrival in Liverpool, he will issue invitations to the leading residents to visit him. He appears to entertain a lively recollection of the kindness with which he was received when here, and to be anxious to reciprocate it. An American paper says:

"Although they will travel incog. as private citizens, attended by their servants, they will necessarily attract considerable attention. So diminutive a man and wife, a father and mother, certainly never before attempted to make the tour to Europe. They will, however, enjoy the trip as well, we will warrant, as if they were of ordinary size. Mr. Stratton speaks with evident pleasure of his many personal acquaintances in Great Britain and France among the most distinguished families, to whom undoubtedly he will with great pride and satisfaction introduce his beautiful bride, and that blessed baby."

"Mr. Stratton has placed his yacht under cover, packed away his carriages, and sold his fast horses, with a view of being absent several years. He is a Freemason and Knight Templar; in fact, he has gone as high in the 'ancient mysteries' as he can go in this country; but he is determined, while abroad, to take as many degrees as money will purchase, and he declares that, if it is possible, he will return to America the tallest Freemason on this continent. His presence will, doubtless, create much excitement in the Masonic lodges of the Old World."

"While this distinguished little family are absent, an elegant mansion will be erected on the grounds recently purchased by Mr. Stratton."

"The site of their future home is delightfully situated half a mile west of Bridgeport, on an elevation fronting Long Island Sound, and commanding a charming and extended sea-view. The family mansion is to be most unique."

"The exterior will be in oriental style, mounted with gilded domes and minarets. That portion of the interior devoted to his own family will be furnished chiefly with articles of ornament and use, corresponding in size with themselves; while that part of the house devoted to visitors and friends will be elegantly furnished with articles of ordinary size."

"While abroad, the little General (for such we must still occasionally call him) will purchase the most curious and elegant articles of vertu to be found in every portion of the globe which he may visit, as well as paintings, statuary, &c., so that when his family are finally settled at housekeeping, their mansion will doubtless be the most attractive establishment in this part of the country. We heartily wish Mr. Charles L. Stratton, whilom Gen. Tom Thumb, and his family a most delightful European trip, and trust that a few years hence we shall find them snugly settled in their native town, enjoying all that domestic felicity to

which they are entitled after their arduous and successful labours in catering to the public taste."

Among the passengers by the steamer City of Washington, which arrived in Liverpool from New York, was the celebrated General Tom Thumb. He is accompanied by his wife and child.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXIII.

STARTLING APPEARANCE.

The marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward past,
But lighter than the whirlwind's blast
He vanished from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow fast
That glances but and dies.

Scott.

In the glorious autumn weather, while poor Amy and her little Owen were struggling for subsistence in their desolated home, Mrs. Llewellyn was carrying out her felonious scheme against Gladys elsewhere.

When that ruthless woman departed so suddenly from Forest Lodge, she took her unhappy victim directly to London, in the hope that the wilderness of the great city would afford a more secure hiding place than the wilderness of the woods had done.

She took a furnished house in one of the most crowded streets. And there she secluded her ward in a solitude even more retired than that of Forest Lodge or of Cader Idris had been.

Here Gladys was consigned to a front chamber on the fourth floor, away up near the top of the house. And as the lower sashes of the windows were guarded like those of a child's nursery, she could not put her head out, or look down into the street below. She could only glance through the upper sashes, at the sky above, or at the tops of the houses over the way.

But yet Gladys did not seem to miss her liberty, or even to wish for a more extended prospect. By the continual administration of powerful sedatives, she had been reduced to a state of physical and mental feebleness resembling second childhood.

The room to which she was restricted was, however, furnished with everything that could contribute to the comfort and amusement of a child and an imbecile. In the first place, it was well ventilated and connected with a spacious dressing closet.

Next, in addition to the usual set of sumptuous chamber furniture, it was provided with a fine piano-forte, a harp, a guitar, and even an accordion. The walls were decorated with bright pictures, and the mantel-shelf was adorned with Dresden china images of beaux and belles, and shepherds and shepherdesses.

But, besides these, there was one toy which seemed a bitter mockery of the poor, bereaved young mother. This was a large, life-sized wax-doll baby—one of those productions of French mechanical art that, "by some devilish contrivance," was made to shut its eyes when laid down, open them when raised up, and to utter a low cry when squeezed. This doll was dressed in every particular as a young living infant, and laid in a pretty "berceauette," or decorated basket cradle.

And although poor Gladys had still reason enough left to know that this doll was not her own living child, yet she was so strangely silly as to lavish upon it a wealth of tenderness and care, as if she imagined that it could benefit by her attention.

Every morning she dressed it in fine clothes, and sent it out by Ennis for an airing. And every night she undressed it, pressed it to her comfortless bosom, and spent hours in rocking it in a low nursing-chair, and singing to it a soft lullaby.

By this time, too, she had been persuaded to believe in her husband's death, and had been familiarized with, if not reconciled to, the idea of her marriage with James Stukely. For on one occasion, when Ennis, who had begun to pity and to love her wronged and helpless charge, said to her:

"Oh, Miss Gladys, how can you kiss and hug an insensible wax doll, as if it was a Christian baby, and could love you for your care?"—the poor young mother answered with the ringing laughter of her earlier girlhood:

"Why, Ennis, if I am to have a wooden head for a husband, why not a wax head for a baby? It is all right, my good Ennis, believe me."

Next to the occupation she found in the care of her "baby," she derived her greatest solace from music. She often sang her favourite songs, accompanying herself on the pianoforte, harp, or guitar, as the case required. And often the passengers of the street below would pause to listen to the sublime strains of divine harmony that seemed the echo of the angels' anthems in heaven, or to the simple trills of delicious melody that seemed showered down from the gladness of some song-bird soaring high in the empyrean.

The stately old-fashioned mansion on the opposite side of the way was owned and inhabited by a wealthy maiden lady, somewhat passed her youth, Miss Wendover. And often she threw open her own windows, and sat within the soft shadow of their lace curtains, listening to the plaintive voice of the invisible singer—"the caged bird," as some people called her, from her barred windows and beautiful voice—the "mad lady," as others less poetical suspected and asserted her to be.

But among all—neighbours or passengers—who listened to her music, there was not one who seemed so much spell-bound by her voice as a poor workman, who was engaged, with many others, in building a large hotel in the same street, and who passed under her windows about four times every day, on his way to his work and to his meals. Many were the half-days' wages this poor fellow was docked of, for wasting his employer's time in listening to the invisible, sweet singer; for no matter whether he was on his way to work, or to dinner, or how great the pressure of business or of hunger might be, the sound of her voice was enough to arrest his hurrying footsteps, and to keep him standing before the house, gaping and staring up into the windows.

On one of these occasions, Mrs. Llewellyn, sitting at her drawing-room windows, within the shadow of crimson-curtains, unseen herself, but seeing everything that passed, noticed this strange, music-mad labourer, standing on the side-walk with the hod on his shoulder, gazing up towards her captive's windows.

Something in his air attracted her attention, and fixed her regards scrutinizingly upon his figure; but when he raised his old hat from his head, and turned his face a little more towards the light, she uttered a low cry, and sank back in her seat, pale and faint.

A minute after, she reached out her hand and touched the bell, that brought her maid to her presence.

"Ennis, come here. Stand just here behind the curtain, and look at that man," she said.

"Yes, madam. Which man?"

"The one in the fustian blouse, with the hod on his shoulders, who is standing by the kerb-stone, looking up at the house. Do you see him?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Ennis, of whom does he remind you?"

"Lord bless us and save us, ma'am!" exclaimed the girl, shrinking back in dismay.

"Look again. Of whom does he remind you, I say?"

"Heaven between us and harm!"

"Ennis, I ask you who that man looks like, and I'll trouble you to answer me."

"Gracious goodness me alive! I beg your pardon, ma'am, but—he looks like the ghost of Master Arthur!"

"Ghost—stuff! But you are right; the likeness is a very striking one. Ennis, go down to the area-gate and watch that man. When he leaves the spot, slip after him, and follow him; find out his name, and occupation, and place of abode! and come back and tell me."

"Yes, madam, if—if I can," said the girl, obediently, leaving the room.

"Strange—strange! I never saw such a likeness—no, never in my life. At first I thought it was the creation of my own imagination; that, like the weak Macbeth, I was growing brain-sick, and seeing 'air-drawn daggers and gibbering ghosts!' But Ennis saw it, too; and Ennis has no more imagination than a pig. And the way in which he listened to her songs and stared up at her windows! Strange, and passing strange! Can that desperate fool have played me false? Can Arthur Powis be living? But no, no, no; I am mad to think it. For if he were living, he would not leave his wife in my hands a single hour," murmured Mrs. Llewellyn, as she paced uneasily up and down her sumptuous drawing-room.

At length she stole up to the window again, and peeped through the blinds.

Yes, there he stood, gazing entranced up at the windows of Gladys, and listening, although her singing had ceased.

His face was very pale, his cheeks hollow, his eyes sunken, and his forehead was drawn into a deep, dark furrow between the eyebrows, as by intense suffering or profound thought.

While Mrs. Llewellyn gazed, he suddenly started as if from a dream, sighed, shook his head, shifted his hod upon the other shoulder, and dropping his chin upon his breast with an air of dejection, walked on.

Ennis came out of her hiding-place, and dogged his footsteps.

Mrs. Llewellyn went away from the window, and recommenced her troubled walk up and down the room.

And so she continued to pace the floor for nearly an hour, and until the return of Ennis.

"Well, girl?" she then demanded, throwing herself into a chair.

"Well, ma'am, he is a poor, simple, innocent fel-

low. His name is Billy Simmons, and he is a stone-mason's labourer, at work on Miss Wendover's great hotel at the corner of the street," said Ennis, catching her breath.

"Miss—who?"

"Miss Wendover, the rich old maid, ma'am, as lives in the great house opposite of us. She has just been investing of a sight of money in building of a new hotel."

"You exasperating blockhead, what do you suppose I care for Miss Wendover and her investments? Tell me about that strange man."

"Yes, ma'am. I did tell you. I followed him all the way to the hotel, where the men were all at work. And I heard the foreman say to him, 'You're behind time again, Billy; mind, I shall dock you a quarter of a day's wages.' And the man said, 'All right, sir.' And he went to fill his hod with mortar. And then, ma'am, I went up to the foreman and said, 'Who is that fellow, sir, as has been annoying us by standing in front of our house, and staring up into our front windows?' And the foreman said, 'Oh, you mustn't mind anything he does; he is a poor, half-witted creature, who means no harm, and hasn't an idea beyond carrying a hod. But I'll look after him, and prevent him from troubling you again.' Then what's his name, sir?" I asked. "Oh, Billy Simmons! He's soft, you know, my girl; you must not mind him. But, anyway, he shall not trouble you again." And then, ma'am, I thanked the foreman and came away."

"Very well. You have done very well, indeed, Ennis. Now, I wish you to watch until that man goes by again in returning from his work; and I wish you to watch him home, and find out where he lives."

"Very well, ma'am."

"And, Ennis—"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You may take that black silk dress of mine, with the bugle trimmings, and make it up for yourself."

"Thank you very much indeed, ma'am."

"You may go now."

Ennis curtsied and left the room.

That evening, when Ennis was missed, her mistress only knew where she was gone. At six o'clock, when she saw the builders going home from their work, she sat herself to watch at the area-gate for the strange workman to pass.

Mrs. Llewellyn also placed herself on the watch behind the front window curtains.

Presently, lingering behind all the rest, came the man she looked for.

He paused in front of the house, looked up at the upper windows, slowly shook his head, and passed on.

Ennis came out and followed him.

Two hours passed before Ennis returned. She found her mistress still in the drawing-room, waiting for her.

"Well, Ennis, have you run your man to earth?"

"Yes, ma'am; and a fine chase I had. He lives in Catherine Street, at an old washer-woman's. I followed him all the way. At one time I feared he would get on to an omnibus; but I made up my mind if he did I would also; but he didn't, and I followed him all the way to Catherine Street on foot. And when I saw him go into a house where there was a landress's sign hanging out, I made so free as to go in on pretence of wanting some washing done. And while I was talking to the landress—who was quite an old woman—she said to the man, 'Billy, your supper's on the kitchen table. Go and eat it.' And the man said, 'All right, ma'am, and he went. 'Is that handsome young man your son, ma'am?' said I. 'Who, Billy? Law, no,' she said; 'but I think as much of him as if he was. He's a lodger.' 'And how long have you known him, ma'am?' said I. 'Many months,' said she. 'But what makes you ask questions? Are you in love with our Billy, young woman?' 'No, I thank you, ma'am,' said I. 'And, as we can't agree about the price of the washing, I think I had better go.' And so I came away, and got into an omnibus, and here I am, ma'am."

"You have done extremely well. So it seems that we have been deceived by one of those strange likelinesses we sometimes see in this world. I had a faint hope that this singular man might chance to be the long-missing Arthur Powis. It has proved otherwise. Let the whole affair be forgotten," she said, hypocritically.

When Ennis left the presence of her mistress, it was to go immediately up-stairs to the room of her charge.

She found the wife of Arthur Powis, with the wax doll baby pressed to her bosom, pacing the floor and singing in a touching voice the lullaby chorus of "Allan Percy's child."

"You staid away so long, Ennis, that I undressed the baby without your help. You may go away now,

and if I want you I can ring," said poor Gladdy; and then she re-commenced her pathetic refrain, "Lullabye, lullabye—"

"Well, this is enough to break one's heart," muttered Ennis to herself, as she left the room. "But, after all, four pounds a month and all the left-off silk gowns and shawls is a great consolation."

Mrs. Llewellyn, for her own part, as soon as she found herself alone, struck the bell that brought the deaf mute to her presence.

"I have been waiting for you all the afternoon and evening. Where have you been?" was the question she rapidly spelled upon her fingers.

He answered by the same means:

"Madam, you remember you gave me a half holiday. I took it, and went to enjoy it."

"I had forgotten. Now attend—"

The mute nodded.

"Is Arthur Powis dead?"

The mute nodded.

"Are you sure?"

He raised his fingers and spelt the word:

"Sure."

"I wish that I could feel sure."

"When I killed the young lion I brought you nix skin, in proof of his death," answered the mute, slowly spelling the words on his fingers.

"You brought me the crushed cap and the blood-stained uniform of the lieutenant; constructive proof, but not conclusive proof, of his death."

"How could I have got the clothes off his living body?"

"You might have stunned him, and he might afterwards have recovered."

"If he had recovered, would he not have raised the alarm? would he not have returned to his wife?"

"One would think so; but—his body was never found. That in itself is strange."

"His body sank at once to the bottom of the river."

"I suppose the lieutenant is really dead. But there is an individual in this city who so strongly resembles Arthur Powis that the circumstance gives me much uneasiness. Have you ever chanced to see such a person?"

The mute slowly and emphatically shook his head.

"He is a labourer, at work on the new hotel at the corner. He carries a hod, and passes here three or four times a day. Watch for him."

The mute nodded his head low, in token of obedience.

"Now go; I have letters to write."

Jade bowed very humbly, and withdrew.

"I feel half the time as if that fellow was deceiving me, and was ready at an instant's provocation to betray me. Yet I must not allow him to suspect that I either doubt or fear him. Ah! what a world this is, where one cannot even trust their confidants. And then the extraordinary likeness this strange man bears to Arthur Powis! Yet it is only an accidental resemblance, of course. I could be nothing else. It would be absurd, preposterous, insane, to believe that Arthur Powis lives, and that this man is he," said Mrs. Llewellyn to herself; but though she said this over and over again, she could not at once conjure to rest the anxiety that troubled her heart.

At length she drew her writing-desk near her, opened it, and commenced the following letter to her promising son, who was still at the university:

"London, October —, 18—.

"MY DEAREST JAMES,—The year that you stipulated should elapse between the death of Arthur Powis and your marriage with his young widow has now passed. Arthur Powis has now been dead rather more than twelve months; and Gladdy has got over her grief, and left off her weeds. She loves you, my son. She always loved you, and you might have married her two years ago, only you were so backward in courting her. Three months ago she begged me for a lock of your hair. I gave it to her. And she has worn it ever since in her bosom, next her heart. You would doubt this fact if it were told you by any other person except your own mother. But you will believe it when it is told you by me, who never in my life, under any circumstances, varied from the strict line of truth. Now that I have assured you of all these facts, so that you must feel convinced that you have won the guileless heart of your young cousin, I hope you will see that every principle of honour requires you to come immediately to London, and make her your wife. I will take care to have everything in readiness for the wedding, so that it may take place on the day after your arrival."

Your affectionate mother,

JANE J. LLEWELLYN.

"James Stukely, Esq."

Having sealed and despatched this letter to the post, Mrs. Llewellyn retired to rest, and slept the sleep of the righteous, undisturbed by the memory of crime, the stings of remorse, or the fear of detection. The day of retribution for her had not yet arrived.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE CAPTIVE MOTHER.

"And I'll deem thee Allan Percy's son,
Lullaby—Lullaby."

SEVERAL days passed; but although a strict watch was kept by Mrs. Llewellyn and her maid and man, no more was seen of the mysterious workman. And, strangely enough, his absence began to give Mrs. Llewellyn more uneasiness than his presence had done.

Where could the missing man be? What could he be about? None but a guilty mind would have troubled itself to ask these questions, because of a supposed resemblance between the living and the dead.

At length, when several days had passed away, she summoned to her presence her confidential maid; who, by the way, was only half in her confidence.

"Ennis, as nearly a week has passed since we have seen that strange hod-carrier, I begin to fear that something may have happened to the poor creature. He may be ill and suffering want; or he may be dead. I wish you would go up to the building, and inquire about him," she said, hypocritically.

Ennis, not in the least degree deceived by her mistress's pretensions to a benevolent interest in the poor workman, curtsied, and left the room to go on her errand.

When she reached the half-finished hotel, and acquired of the master-mason for the missing labourer, the man broke out into a good-humoured laugh, as he exclaimed:

"I say, young woman, this is the second time this week that you have been here inquiring after Billy! The first time you wanted to know who he was, and you complained about his staring up at your windows. Now I suspect it was you he was staring at, and that you were not half as much offended about it as you pretended to be. For, now you miss him, you come asking where he is. Now, my dear, what is Billy to you, or you to Billy? Have you fallen in love with the handsome fellow, eh, my girl, that you run after him so?"

"I thank you, sir," said Ennis, tossing her head. "I'm a respectable young lady, and don't demean myself with running after men. I come here by the orders of my mistress, to ask after a poor, friendless workman, as she is afraid he may be sick and suffering."

"Very well, then, my respectable young lady, you may tell your mistress that I have not seen sight of Billy since last Saturday evening, when he was paid off. I have been expecting him to return every day; but you see he hasn't made his appearance. And, moreover, I don't know where he lodges, and don't know where to send for him."

With this answer, Ennis returned to her mistress. "It is wonderful, wonderful, how the thought of that strange man worries me. He is a nightmare! a man of a dream!—And he received his week's pay and then disappeared. Where has he gone? What is he about? Mischief! Stuff! I believe I am going mad! What is to me, that I should torment myself about him?" thought Mrs. Llewellyn, as she rummaged over the news that Ennis had brought her. In a few minutes she spoke aloud:

"Ennis!"

"Madam?"

"Go to the man's lodgings, and inquire what he became of him."

"Yes, ma'am; but—"

"Well?"

"I beg your pardon, madam; but does it look well for a young woman to be going about, asking after a young man?"

"It looks well for a young woman to obey her mistress's orders promptly and without question," said Mrs. Llewellyn, severely.

Ennis raised just a suspicion of a pout as she turned to leave the room, which happily her mistress did not see as she called her back.

"Ennis!"

"Yes, madam?"

"Unless you are a fool, you need not compromise yourself in any way. The man's landlady is a landress, I believe. Well, go to her again, on pretence of getting her to wash for you; and use your eyes and your tact, and you may find out all I wish to know about the man, without once asking a question."

"I'll try, ma'am," replied the girl, as she left the room.

Ennis took an omnibus, and went directly to Catherine Street, and to the house of the landress. She found Mrs. Slush in the suds and in the sulk.

"I have come about the washing again, ma'am," said Ennis, dropping, uninvited, into the nearest seat; "and I want to know how much a dozen you will—"

"I won't do it for anything a dozen—there! I have more to do now than I can turn my hands to!"

Then, slipped in the mouth, as it were, by this rope, Ennis remained silent for a little while, and cautiously looked around the room for some sign of the workman; but saw nothing—not a hat, coat, shoe, or any other article of a "gentleman's" belongings.

"I have more work to do, and gets less pay for it, now any slave in the whole earth!" said the woman.

"But we would pay you well," suggested Ennis.

"Don't know whether you would or not! and don't care, neither. Shan't take no more washing from nobody!"

"Have you got the toothache, ma'am?" mischievously inquired Ennis.

"No! it's the ear-ache," snapped the woman, dashing both arms into the water, as if she would have raised a tempest in a tub.

"I am very sorry your ear aches," said Ennis.

"If you are, then, why don't you stop talking? My ears wouldn't ache if it wasn't for your tongue—always a boring—boring—into 'em like a gimblet! What are you waiting for, any way?" sharply demanded the shrew, stopping in her work, to stare Ennis out of countenance.

That, however, was not so easily to be done. Ennis returned her broad stare with a look of modest assurance, and answered:

"I am waiting to rest a little while, if you have no objection, and then I will go away."

The landress returned fiercely to her washing, and worked away as if she was bent on the annihilation of everything under her hands.

In the present humour of her hostess, Ennis could not venture to make any inquiries about her boarder. So she sat on in silence, waiting for a favourable opening, and hoping for the possible arrival of the workman.

At length the landress, lifting the tub of dirty suds in both hands, and looking as though, upon a very slight provocation, she would donche the whole over Ennis's nice new bonnet and black silk dress (the very one that her mistress had recently bestowed on her), demanded curtly:

"Well! are you there yet? Ain't you rested by this time?"

"Thank you, yes; I will go now," said Ennis, rising.

"I think it's about time to go."

Ennis felt as if it was "about time" to perform her errand, if she was to do so at all, so she risked the question:

"Does that young man board with you yet?"

"That which?" asked the landress, jerking the question out.

"The young labouring man—does he board with you yet?"

"There! I knowed as you'd come arter no good! running arter men! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Go away."

"My missus sent me," replied Ennis, indignantly.

"A likely story, indeed! Go 'way, I tell you."

"My missus did send me! She missed the poor young fellow, and thought he might be ill and in want, and sent me to inquire after him."

"I don't believe you! and I don't believe as you've got any missus; and I don't believe she sent you; and I don't believe as you are any better'n you ought to be!"

"Few of us are!" laughed Ennis.

"I am, if you please, Miss Imperence; so none of your insinuations. Go 'way!" exclaimed the exasperated landress.

"Tell me first if the young man still boards here, and why he hasn't been to work."

"I shan't tell you nothing at all about it! What's that to you? Go 'way!" cried the woman, advancing threateningly upon Ennis with the tub of soap-suds.

The girl made a precipitate retreat; and, finding it utterly useless to pursue her investigations further, got into the omnibus and returned home.

Ennis knew perfectly well that if she made a true report of her visit, her mistress would blame her for her want of success; so she told falsehoods instead.

"I went to Mrs. Slosh's, ma'am; but he has left there ever since Saturday night, and she doesn't know where he has gone," was the story she told.

"It is in mischief somewhere. But, nonsense, how can his mischief affect me? That man's resemblance to the dead man certainly unsettles my judgment! I must try to forget the whole matter," said the lady to herself.

At that moment, a letter was brought in by Jude, and placed in her hands.

"You may both leave me," she said, addressing her maid and man, who still lingered, as if waiting her commands.

When they had retired, she opened her letter. It was from her son, in reply to her own, in which she had summoned him to London. Mr. Stukely informed

his mother that he should follow his letter so quickly as to arrive a very few days after it.

Mrs. Llewellyn immediately left the room, to set on foot preparations for his reception.

Then she went up-stairs to see Gladdys. She found that poor victim of slow poison, sitting in the low rocking-chair, with her wax baby pressed to her heart, rocking it slowly to and fro, and crooning to it the refrain of "Allan Percy's child." Her face was pale as death, and her dark hair floated loose and long over her white wrapper.

"Lullaby—lul-la-b-y-o," she sang.

"You may stop that song now, Gladdys. Allan Percy is coming," said Mrs. Llewellyn, speaking to her in the soothing manner she would have used towards an ailing child.

"Ay? Is Allan Percy coming? I thought he was only in the song?" said Gladdys, archly; but still with the questionable archness of a child or an imbecile.

"Your Allan is coming, at any rate."

"My Allan is in the grave, where I, his widow, soon shall be," said Gladdys, with a sudden change of manner.

"Nonsense; you are too young to die! There are other Allans left in the world."

"Yes; 'as good fish in the sea as ever was caught out of it,' ain't there?" she demanded, with another fitful change.

"Why, certainly! There is your cousin James Stukely. He will soon be here. You will treat him better when he comes this time than you did the last time, will you not?"

"What last time?" asked Gladdys.

"Good heaven! Is her memory actually failing?" thought Mrs. Llewellyn, in dismay. Then speaking aloud, she said:

"Never mind what time; you will treat him well now, will you not?"

"Oh, yes! what do I care?"

"And you will marry him?"

"Oh, yes, of course!"

Life is all a wariorum.
And I care not how it goes!"

said Gladdys, breaking out into the chorus of a vulgar comic song that her ears had picked up, heaven knows where; probably from some night reveller staggering home past her own chamber windows.

"Very well now, my dear; remember it is just for your own happiness," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

"Just so," admitted Gladdys.

"You know, as soon as ever you are married, you will go with your husband on a pleasant bridal tour, and see many distant places and interesting objects, and have a delightful time altogether."

"Yes, I know."

"And then you will return to Cader Idris, and be Lady Paramount there."

"All right!"

"And now think of what I have told you, Gladdys. And good-night," said the lady, turning to leave the room.

"Good-night," said Gladdys—
"And I will dream thou art Allan Percy's child,
Lullaby—Lul-la-by—"

she sang, recurring to her employment of rocking the wax baby to sleep.

Three days after this, just at nightfall, Mr. Stukely arrived.

"Now, you are sure it is all right this time, and no mistake, mother?" he asked, as soon as they were seated *tête-à-tête* at the tea table.

"Quite sure, my son. Gladdys is still a little odd in her ways; but she is no longer violent."

"But—I wish she wasn't odd, either," complained Mr. Stukely.

"Don't be unreasonable, James. You cannot have everything you wish in this world. Here in Gladdys you have youth, beauty, accomplishments, amiability, rank, and wealth; what more can any reasonable man expect? If she is a little odd in her manners just at first, you must put up with it; it will wear off in time."

"And does she really wear my hair in her bosom?"

"Yes; next her heart."

"Extraordinary!"

"I have seen her kiss it passionately."

"Oh-h-h! And to-morrow she can kiss me if she likes!"

"But, mother, I must, indeed, really must see her alone before we stand up to be married again! For, mother, I must have her promise to marry me personally before I risk being made such a fool of as I was before."

"Is not her promise to me sufficient?" coldly demanded the lady.

"No, mother! She promised *you* before! And broke the promise to *me*," said Mr. Stukely, firmly.

Perceiving that her usually manageable son was in an unusually unmanageable fit of obstinacy, Mrs. Llewellyn promised that he should see Gladdys alone the next day.

Accordingly, early in the morning, Mrs. Llewellyn went up-stairs to the chamber of Gladdys, to prepare her for the visit. First, she gave her, in a cup of coffee, an extra dose of the will-paralyzing drug.

Then she said:

"Gladdys, my love, your cousin is coming up here to ask you to marry him. Now what are you going to answer him?"

"What ought I to answer?"

"Why, tell him 'yes,' of course."

"Yes, of course," repeated Gladdys, like a child learning a lesson by rote.

"And perhaps he may ask you if you are going to marry him of your own free will? If he does, you must say—'Certainly.'"

"Certainly," repeated Gladdys.

"And mind! if you don't marry him, you will never leave this room! But if you do marry him, you will leave it immediately, to travel all over the world, if you like."

"Oh, I'll marry him! Never you fear! Lord! bless your soul, I don't care! I'd just as lief do one thing as another!"

"Very well, then; do as I tell you, and you will be happy."

"All right," said Gladdys.

Mrs. Llewellyn then went in search of her son, whom she found and brought to the door of Gladdys's room, saying:

"Now, unbeliever, go in and ask her for yourself! But, mind! she is a young and delicate woman, and she will naturally be slow to acknowledge any very ardent attachment to yourself. You must take her love for granted, when she consents to marry you!"

"Ah, indeed!"

"Certainly. The greatest proof she can give you of her love is to give you her hand."

"Extraordinary!"

"Stuff! What is there extraordinary about it?"

"Why, that she should consent to marry me without owning that she loves me!"

"You simpleton! Do you expect her to do the wooing?"

"Don't know; I've seen 'em do it."

"Seen whom?"

"The girls, to be sure."

"You never did."

"Oh! haven't I, though?"

"Forward minxes! Gladdys is not one of those."

Now go in and speak to her," said Mrs. Llewellyn, opening the chamber door to let him pass, and then closing it and placing her ear to the keyhole.

When James Stukely entered the room, Gladdys was sitting before the piano, intent upon practising a new piece of music, for which task, indeed, she seemed scarcely to have sufficient power of application, for she continued to go over and over a few notes, like a parrot that could not learn its lesson.

Mr. Stukely felt his throat choked and his face heated, as he softly walked towards Gladdys, and faltered:

"How do you do, cousin Gladdys?"

"Oh, I am well, thank you. And you?" she said, wheeling around on her seat, so as to face him.

"All the better for seeing you, cousin," said Mr. Stukely, plucking up a little spirit, and looking around for a chair.

There was none near him, however; nor did Gladdys invite him to sit down; but, on the contrary, she sat and looked at him with calm, questioning eyes, as though expecting him to declare his business, and then go.

Mr. Stukely stood, twisting his thumbs and losing his spirits, for a little while; and then, not having the courage to fetch a chair and seat himself uninvited, he went to the corner of the piano, leaned his arm upon it, and stammered out his errand:

"Cousin Gladdys, I see you are busy, so I won't stay long. I only came to—to ask—to ask you—if—if you—if you would—if you would please to marry me?"

"Of course," replied Gladdys, in the words that had been put into her mouth.

"Oh! I'm glad. I didn't know you would. I—I was afraid. I thought—in short—cousin Gladdys, is it of your own free will?"

"Certainly," answered Gladdys, as she had been taught.

"Well, cousin Gladdys, all that I can say is that—that I thank you kindly. And that—that I love you dearly. And that—that I'll always do whatever you tell me to do, cousin Gladdys. I—I—goodness knows I will!"

Now Gladdys, having said her lesson by rote, seemed to think that her duty was done; for she coolly wheeled herself round again to the piano, and recommenced practising her new piece of music.

James Stukely remained leaning on the piano, watching her, and muttering to himself:

"Extraordinary!"

But she seemed perfectly oblivious of his presence. At length he could bear his position no longer, and he stammered forth:

"Cousin Gladys, as you are busy, I think I will go away, and try to compose myself after this—this—this very agitating interview."

"Very well," said Gladys, without lifting her eyes or stopping her fingers.

"And—and you and mother, you know, can do all the rest," said Mr. Stukely.

As Gladys did not reply to this remark, but continued to play, Mr. Stukely considered himself at liberty to leave the presence, and so stole on tip-toe from the room.

"Well?" inquired Mrs. Llewellyn, who was waiting for him in the passage.

"Well, she says she'll marry me, and of her own free will, too."

"I told you so. I hope you will take my word for the next thing that I may happen to tell you."

"Yes, mother. But—"

"What now?"

"Gladys seems to me to be weak-minded. I do wish she had a little more mind."

"Never worry about that, my dear. She has everything else—youth, beauty, amiability, rank, wealth, and accomplishments. And as to mind, my dear, why you have enough for both," said the lady, patting him on the shoulder.

"That's true," said Mr. Stukely, complacently, and happily unconscious of the covert irony in his mother's words.

(To be continued.)

MARRIED FLIRTATIONS; OR, TURNING THE TABLES.

THE last dying cadences of a deliciously dreamy waltz, across whose weird notes the soul of Beethoven had poured out its magic sadness, were floating over the perfumed crowd that filled the ball-room of the fashionable west-end hotel; there was the stir and murmur of separating couples, and the ill-suppressed yawns of weary "wall-flowers" that follow in the wake of every brilliant waltz.

Kate Elwyn stood in the recess of the window, playing carelessly with the faded jessamines and roses of her bouquet, while her blue, lovely eyes wandered anxiously from one place to another, evidently in quest of some familiar countenance which they could not discover.

There were few more beautiful faces than her own, even in that festive crowd, where the belles had brought their diamonds and bright eyes to dazzle the grave politicians and lawmakers of the land.

Rather beneath the medium size, with the fragile delicacy of a fairy, her complexion had the transparent waxen bloom that you look for only in children, while her heavy bands of golden hair lay over her somewhat low forehead in rippling waves of amber. Very dark blue eyes, translucent as a sapphire of the first water, and a little crimson mouth, curved like Cupid's bow, gave additional piquancy to her face, and altogether she was as perfect a specimen of the radiant blonde as one often sees, out of a picture gallery, or a novel.

Suddenly her cheeks blossomed into roses, and her whole countenance brightened, as a tall and rather elegant-looking gentleman languidly sauntered towards her.

"Charley, I thought you were never coming!"

"I've only been down in the supper-room for a few minutes, my dear—sorry you've missed me. Anything I can do for you now?"

"Yes—do get my shawl and fan, and we'll go. It's after one, and I'm completely tired out."

"Couldn't, my dear," said Mr. Elwyn, breaking a moss rose-bud from his wife's bouquet, and fastening it jauntily into the button-hole of his coat. "I am engaged for three waltzes and a quadrille still. Miss Raymond would never forgive me for deserting her."

Kate's lip curled laughingly, and a deeper shade of crimson stole into her cheek.

"Jealous, eh?" laughed her husband, patting her bright hair lightly. "Now, Kate, that's a little too silly of you. Don't you know that at a place like this a man is expected to make himself generally agreeable to the ladies? Pray, my dear, don't become so absurd and ridiculous as to—"

"And so," interrupted Mrs. Elwyn, bitterly, "your wife's wishes and convenience are secondary to Miss Raymond's will."

"The green-eyed monster certainly has invaded your peace, my love!" said Mr. Elwyn. "Upon my word, I have always given you credit for a little more common sense."

"Charles," said Kate, quietly, and without heeding the careless sarcasm of his tone, "I am weary of this round of senseless gaiety—I am sick of the tumults

and vanities of London society. Will you take me home?"

"Why, Kate! after all your anxiety to pass a season in this great centre of social and political life! You have been teasing me ever since we were married to indulge you with a season in London."

"I know it, Charles," she meekly answered, trying to repress the tears that were brimming in her eyes; "but I have at last learned the folly of seeking real pleasure anywhere but in the precincts of one's own home. My taste for gaiety is entirely satisfied, and you can't imagine how homesick I feel—how anxious to see the dear little ones once again. When will you take me home, Charles?"

"Next week, perhaps, my love—or the week after, if you positively insist upon it."

"Oh, Charles! why not go to-morrow?"

"Impossible, Kate. I am positively engaged for every day of this week."

"Engaged?" repeated Kate, opening her blue eyes.

"I know nothing of these arrangements."

"No, my dear, I suppose not," said Elwyn, lazily.

"Did you imagine I should come and ask your permission every time I wanted to drive out or smoke a cigar with two or three gentlemen?"

Kate's lips quivered, and she turned quietly away. Charles Elwyn looked after her, with an amused expression in his eye, and a half smile on his lip.

"She's jealous, as I live!" he muttered—"jealous of Aurora Raymond and the pretty widow. Well, let her put it out at her leisure—it will never do to encourage this sort of thing."

If he could but have seen her, a few moments afterwards (just when he was whirling through the waltz, with Miss Raymond's raven curls floating over his shoulder), sobbing in the silence of her own dimly-lighted room, the golden air all unloosed from hair-pin and jewelled comb, and the blue eyes looking like morning-glories drowned in rain—well, perhaps it would have done him good, perhaps not. It is not always best to let a man know the full extent of his power over that miserable little captive, his wife—it is astonishing how much the sex delights in tormenting its victim.

There is one blessed avenue of relief always open to womankind, however—a good cry. No wonder that Kate Elwyn felt better when she had wiped away the shower of tears, and brushed back the lovely rippling tresses from her fevered forehead.

"What shall I do?" she murmured to herself, deluging her handkerchief in rose-water, and trying vainly to cool her burning eyes; "what ought I to do? Oh, I wish I had never come away from home—it is a judgment on me, for leaving my dear little babies in the care of hirelings! I was so happy before I ever thought of this hollow, deceitful whirlpool of fashion!"

She burst into fresh floods of tears as she remembered her husband's last words.

"It was cruel of him to speak in that cold, sneering way to me," she sobbed. "Have I lost all the spells he used to tell me I possessed? If he only knew how these things hurt me, I am sure he would act in a far different manner."

She shrank involuntarily back, as if some rude hand had struck her, as Miss Raymond's clear, metallic laugh suddenly floated up, audible through the closed door of her room. And then she sat her compressed lips together, and a new look came into the liquid depths of her wet blue eyes.

The gilded hand of the carved Parisian clock on the mantel had travelled nearly twice round the circle of enamel figures before Kate Elwyn lifted her gaze from the bunches of velvet roses in the carpet. What was she pondering on?

"Sitting up, eh, Kate? Why I thought you were tired to death?" said Elwyn, as he entered the room, and his wife laid down her book and welcomed him with a bright, careless smile.

"Yes, I've been so much interested in that delightful book," exclaimed Kate, enthusiastically. "I do wish I knew whether Sir Guy gets that property or not!"

"She has got over her sulks amazingly quick," was the husband's internal comment, as he kicked off his boots and lazily unfastened his lavender silk necktie.

"O, thank you, Mr. Elwyn; I've had such a charming ride!"

And Aurora Raymond sprang lightly from the carriage step, one tiny gloved hand resting on Mr. Elwyn's arm, the other holding up the folds of her violet velvet mantle.

He touched his hat gallantly as she tripped over the door steps, all smiles and dimples.

"I wonder if Kate would like a turn before dinner," he said to himself, consulting his gold watch. "I'll run up and see—poor little thing!"

He sprang up the stairs, two steps at a time, and burst into his wife's room.

"Put on your bonnet, puss, and we'll have a ride," he exclaimed. "Hallo! she isn't here—what the mischief does this mean?"

No, she was not there—neither was her blue velvet hat, with the white ostrich plume, nor the magnificent cashmere shawl that had been sent over from India for her wedding present just five years ago—and Mr. Elwyn came slowly down-stairs again, feeling very much inclined to get into a passion!

"Do you know where my wife is?" he asked Miss Ariworth, a lady who spent one-half her time at the hotel windows, and the other half in catechising the servants, and who, consequently, knew all that was to be known concerning people's out-goings and in-comings, generally.

"She's out riding in Colonel Warrington's barouche—been gone ever since morning," returned the gossiping matron, with great promptitude.

"Out riding!" Elwyn's brow contracted.

"Strange—very strange," he muttered, "to drive out in that sort of way without so much as saying a word to me! I always fancied that Warrington's puppy, and I'm sure of it now!"

He went down and dismissed his equipage, and then returned to the drawing-room, as restless as the Wandering Jew. After one or two moody turns across the long apartment, he sat gloomily down in the window-recess. Even Aurora Raymond's pretty lisping chatter could not interest him now.

"Would Kate never come?" he thought, as he looked for the fortieth time at his watch.

She came at last, just in time to run up-stairs for a hurried dinner-toilet—came, smiling and lovely, with her hair blown about by the fresh wind, and her eyes sparkling radiantly.

Elwyn could have knocked Colonel Warrington down for the involuntary gaze of admiration with which he looked after his fair companion.

Presently Mrs. Kate re-appeared, in a magnificent dress of lustrous silver-green silk, lighted up by the flash of emeralds at her throat and wrists, and frontal green mosses drooping from her hair.

"Why have you put on that odious green dress?" asked Elwyn, catching at some slight pretext as an escape-valve for his ill-humour. "You know how much I dislike green."

"Oh, well," said Kate, nonchalantly, "you are so fidgetty, Charles! What difference can it possibly make to you whether I wear green or yellow? It is entirely a by-gone fashion for husbands and wives to study one another's whims, as in *Darby and Joan*. We dress entirely to please the public—the *eye* world, you know. And I put on this silk to flatter Mr. Garnett—he admires green so much!"

Charles Elwyn stared at his wife in speechless astonishment. What did it mean? She had always been the humblest slave to his slightest wish or caprice—and now she smilingly set him at defiance! What evil spirit possessed her?

She never came near him all the evening—never sought his approval by the little shy glances of appeal or the questioning looks that had been so inexhaustibly dear to him. No—she chatted away, bewitchingly self-reliant, the centre of an admiring group, and Mr. Elwyn was ready to rush out of the room in a transport of exasperation.

"Allow me to congratulate you on your treatment of a wife, sir," said Colonel Warrington. "I have always known she was a beauty; but I never before appreciated her claims to be called a wit."

Elwyn glared speechlessly at the polite colonel, who was evidently surprised at the ungracious reception of his little compliment.

"Just what I might have expected," he muttered to himself, plucking fiercely at his mustaches. "What the deuce did I bring her here for, if I didn't want every fool in society to fall down and worship her!"

"Would you like a drive after dinner, Kate?" he asked, one evening, after about three days spent in this very edifying manner.

"I couldn't possibly this evening, dear," she said, adjusting the wreaths of ivy that depended from her shining hair. "We've arranged such a nice party for a drive."

"Well, what's to prevent me from driving you?" asked Mr. Elwyn, anxiously.

"Our party is all made up," said Kate, coolly. "I've promised to go in Mr. Garnett's carriage. He is so delightfully agreeable, and I like him so much."

"The dickens you do!" growled Elwyn, his face elongating and growing dark.

"But I'll tell you what you might do, if you pleased," suggested Kate, innocently. "Miss Raymond would like to go, I've no doubt, or Mrs. Everest; and there can be no possible objection to an extra carriage in the party, so that—"

"Hang Miss Raymond and Mrs. Everest!" ejaculated the irate husband.

"With all my heart, my dear," said Kate. "Only,

you see, it's quite impossible for me to break my promise to Mr. Garnett."

Mr. Elwyn's temper was my no means improved when he stood on the hotel steps, and watched the merry party drive off, their gay voices echoing like a mockery of his own gloomy reflections. He had never felt so utterly lonely and forlorn in the whole course of his life.

"Dear me, what a beautiful evening for a ride," sighed Aurora Raymond, looking sweetly up from her volume of poems, as Mr. Elwyn re-entered the drawing-room, looking not unlike a man who had just had a molar extracted.

But he didn't take the hint, acting as Miss Raymond afterwards indignantly remarked, "more like a bear than a man," and sitting morosely down to the perusal of the newspapers. Alas, for the raven curls and oriental eyes—their spell was broken!

How long the slow creeping hours seemed before Kate came back. Long ere the sound of carriage wheels grated on the pavement before the door, he went up to his own room, and tried, uselessly enough, to amuse himself with books and letter-writing. All his efforts were unavailing; between him and every occupation to which he turned crept one gloomy thought—a sore pang—to think that Kate was happy without his society—that she never missed his absent voice and smile.

"I wonder if I'm jealous?" he muttered to himself, still plucking fiercely at the dark mustache. "It's not an agreeable sensation, at all events. I wonder if Kate felt so whenever I flirted with Aurora and the widow?"

That was quite a new consideration.

Would the time ever come when Kate's heart would be estranged from him?—estranged by his own idle and absurd conduct?—when the loving, sensitive nature would cease to respond to his touch? The very fancy was agony.

He was wrapped in these gloomy meditations, when the door opened, and his bright-haired little wife tripped in, looking very much like a magnified sunbeam! She stopped suddenly when she saw his head bowed down upon his hands.

"Charles—does your head ache?"

"No."

"Then what is the matter?"

"My heart aches, Kate," he said, sadly; "it aches to think that my wife has ceased to love me!"

She came to his side, and threw her arms about his neck with caressing affection.

"Charles, what do you mean?"

"I mean, Kate, that when you desert me for the society of others, and cease to pay any regard to my wishes, I can come to but one conclusion."

"And that?"

"Is that you love me no longer!"

"Charles," said Kate, smiling archly up into his face, "does it grieve you to have me prefer the society of others to your own?"

"It breaks my heart, Kate!" he said, passionately.

"Then, dearest, let us make a bargain. Let us allow Miss Raymond and Mrs. Everest to console themselves with Colonel Warrington and Mr. Garnett, while we are happy with one another. Shall it be so?"

"Kate! you have been acting a part!"

"Of course I have. Did you suppose for a single moment that I was in earnest?"

The loving kisses she showered upon his brow dispelled every lurking shadow from the husband's heart, and he felt how inexpressibly dear his young wife was to him.

In the next day's train Mr. and Mrs. Elwyn left London, mutually convinced that they had had quite enough of the gay capital.

There were two unmistakably good effects consequent on the sojourn, however—Kate was satisfied to remain quietly at home for the rest of her life, and Charles was completely cured of every latent tendency to flirt!

A. R.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD "PALACE."—"I shall trace the career of a few of those early Roman words, in order to show how words may change, and how they adapt themselves to the changing wants of each generation. I begin with the word *Palace*. A palace now is the abode of a royal family. But if we look at the history of the name, we are soon carried back to the shepherds of the Seven Hills. There, on the Tiber, one of the seven hills was called the *Collis Palatina*, and the hill was called *Palatium*, from *Pala*, a pastoral deity, whose festival was celebrated every year on the 21st of April, as the birthday of Rome. It was to commemorate the day on which Romulus, the wild-child, was supposed to have drawn the first furrow on the foot of that hill, and thus to have laid the foundation of the most ancient part of Rome, the *Roma Quadrata*. On this hill, the *Collis Palatina*, stood in later times the houses of Cicero and of his neighbour and enemy Catiline. Augustus

built his mansion on the same hill, and his example was followed by Tiberius and Nero. Under Nero, all private houses had to be pulled down on the *Collis Palatinus*, in order to make room for the emperor's residence, the *Domus Aurea*, as it was called—the Golden house. This house of Nero's was henceforth called the *Palatium*, and it became the type of all the palaces of the kings and emperors of Europe."

OCTAVIA'S PROBATION.

THE castle of the Baron Robert Woldenberg was situated upon the southern bank of the river Moselle, near where it joins the Rhine. It was a grand old structure, overlooking a beautifully diversified section of country; and, unlike many other feudal dwellings of like character, there was much simple beauty in the architectural design and finish of those parts which belonged to the household.

Robert Woldenberg was near sixty years of age—a large-framed, finely-formed, noble-looking man; but his years upon earth were at an end. In the warmth of his zeal, he had, some years before, given his services to Flanders against Louis XIV. of France; and as a military chieftain, he had few superiors. Rewards, both of empty titles and of substantial honours, had been showered upon him; but they were not long to be his. During the siege of an important garrison near Lille he had received a severe wound, which, not having been properly attended to, had eaten away the foundation of his life.

And now, just as the great lindens that towered above the castle turrets were putting on their garb of spring, the Baron Robert Woldenberg lay upon his bed, awaiting the coming of the dread messenger. By his side sat his only daughter, the Lady Octavia, a lovely and loving maiden of eighteen summers, whose heart was all goodness and truth. The baron had not married until past the middle age, and his wife had lived only a few short years after the birth of their child; so Octavia had grown up with only her father to love.

"Now, my precious child," said Woldenberg, reaching forth and taking Octavia's hand, "you must dry your eyes, for I have something of importance to say to you. We have dwelt long enough upon the dark side of the coming scene. There is a bright side, my darling, and I shall ere long behold it. Ah! more than once in my dreams have I seen your sweet mother holding out her arms and beckoning for me to join her in the better world. There is a brighter side, my child; and there is a better world than this. And yet this poor world of ours is much better than we give it credit for. Enjoy it, Octavia; live purely, as you have thus far lived; and when the last hour comes, may you be as ready to answer the summons as I am now."

The baron rested awhile; and beneath the influence of his peaceful words and his calm resignation, his daughter dried her tears, and ceased her sobbing.

"I told you," resumed her father, at length, "that I had something of importance to say unto you. Listen to me attentively: Ere long, after I am gone, there will be many applicants for your hand; there will be many suitors at your feet; for it is known that Robert Woldenberg leaves much wealth behind him, and that you are his only child."

"I want no lover—I want no husband," said Octavia, in sobbing tones. "If you leave me, you will bear away from earth the only object of my love!"

"Ah, my child," returned the baron, shaking his head, "you don't know your own heart. Winter cometh upon all nature, and the flowers die, and the green leaves wither, and the verdure drieth up; but the spring-time is sure to come again, as it hath now come, and again the earth puts on its smile of gladness. So you, darling, when the winter of mourning is past, will come forth joyous and glad. You will think of your father as of one who has gone to a brighter world, and thus thinking, you will not cease to love him. But let us now to other matters. I said that you would have many suitors; and in this connection I wish you to give me a promise. It may seem exacting, but I have my reasons for it."

"You can ask me nothing, my father, which I will not readily grant." And thus speaking, Octavia bent over and kissed his pale cheek.

"Before I went to Flanders," pursued the baron, "I made my will, and that document is now in concealment. My old attorney knows where it is; and, in case he should die before the time I have appointed, he will leave behind him written instructions to his successor. You must not marry until that will is brought to light. Ay, more—you must not plight your troth until you see that will. But, my child, I do not mean that your term of probation shall be very long. It shall not extend over five years. If, before the expiration of that time, you do not find the document, the attorney will then produce it for you.

Only five years, Octavia. You will be still young, even then. What think you?"

"Oh, my father, I promise you, with all my heart. Make it ten years, if you please."

"No, darling; five years is long enough. But you may not wait so long. Some strange fate may throw the magic parchment into your hands ere the five years have elapsed. But you will wait—you will wait patiently—and in the time to come you shall know why I have put this restraint upon you. I trust that your promise is cheerful and free."

"Yes, my father; and in accordance with my own feelings, too."

At this juncture a servant appeared and announced the doctor, and Octavia arose and withdrew.

In less than a week from that time all that was mortal of the Baron Robert Woldenberg had been consigned to the grave, and his daughter mourned with a grief that, for a time, refused to be comforted. And there were other mourners; for the children of toil, far and near, had loved the generous old baron as children love a parent.

But Robert Woldenberg had told to his child the truth: Winter cannot always last. The pure heart cannot always mourn. The Spring time came at length, and Octavia once more smiled as of old;—not that she had forgotten the death of her father,—no, no!—but time had softened the blow, and with the soul of Faith she still loved him and blessed his memory; and this very Faith, blended as it was with gentle resignation, gave new charms to her life.

At the end of a year, when the flowers were once more bursting into bloom, the suitors began to come; but the heiress of Woldenberg had no ear for their tales of love.

Some of them she respected, some she liked as friends; but no one did she love.

She might have learned to love, however, had she been less reserved; but, remembering the promise she had made to her father, she kept herself aloof from the temptation to drink of the passion-brimming cup.

And so, one after another, the disappointed suitors took themselves away—some of them deeply pained, but none of them angry; for the lady had treated them all most kindly, and in no act of hers could they detect the least sign of coquetry.

People wondered much at the conduct of the lady, for among those who had sought her hand had been some of the wealthiest and noblest youths of Germany; but she cared not for the opinions of others while she felt in her heart that she was doing right.

At length the treaty of Rastadt was ratified, and France and Germany were at peace. War-worn soldiers, old and young, came back to their homes to embrace their loved ones, and many a village and hamlet blazed with the fires of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

One day—in the early part of the afternoon—during the month of September, an officer, wearing the uniform of a major of the Imperial Guard, stopped at the castle, and desired to speak with the mistress. He was young—not more than five-and-twenty—and the causes which had led to his present enviable advancement were apparent in his noble bearing, and in the calm light of intellect and self-reliant power that beamed upon his handsome face. He was conducted to one of the reception-rooms, where Octavia soon joined him. He arose as the maiden entered, and for a moment he stood as stands one before whom fits some celestial mission; but he recovered himself.

"Lady," he said; at the same time drawing a small roll of vellum from his bosom, "this must be my introduction."

Octavia took the missive, and read as follows: "TO THE LADY OCTAVIA WOLDENBERG.—Cousin of ours—The bearer of this, Major Edgar Eppendorf, will spend a short time in your neighbourhood on business of State. As our acquaintance in that far-off region is limited, I must ask you to give him a home beneath your roof, during his stay. Do this, and you will please an old friend of your father, as well as your emperor."

When Octavia had read the letter, she looked up into the officer's face with a frank, beaming smile.

"Indeed, sir," she said, "I know not how I have merited so much of the emperor's consideration."

"Ah, lady," replied Eppendorf, in a tone so soft and sad that it thrilled his listener to the soul, "if you deem that the proudest prince in Christendom lowers his dignity when he claims the friendship of the daughter of Robert Woldenberg, then you know not the noble wealth of memory which your father has left behind him. Oh! pardon, pardon, gentle lady—I meant not to touch your heart thus."

Octavia could not keep back the tears which this allusion to her father had called forth; but she quickly wiped her eyes, and then said:

"Do not think me foolish, sir, because I display this weakness. If you knew my father, then you

knew one of the kindest and best of men that ever lived."

"I have seen him, lady. I met him once upon the field of battle, and I met him again at the palace of the emperor. I will not add to what you have said; only simply to remark that his bravery and his genius were equal to his kindness and goodness. I trust that I do not discommode his daughter in thus presenting our sovereign's letter."

"Oh, no, sir! indeed you do not!" cried Octavia, while her lustrous eye kindled, and the rich blood flushed her cheek. "He who has fought by the side of my father is thrice welcome to Woldenberg. Everything shall be done, sir, to make your stay pleasant and comfortable. I will send a servant to show you to your apartments; and when you have rested from your journey, you may command me."

The lady left the room, and in a little while a manservant appeared, who led the major to the apartments which had been set apart for his use; and when he had washed, and changed his clothing, he threw himself upon a soft couch, and tried to sleep; for he had ridden far and fast. But sleep did not come so readily. He had something to think of—something that thrilled his heart with strange sensations. He could have slept soundly upon the eve of a great battle; but he could not sleep soundly now; and after a drowsy, dreamy rest of two hours, he arose to answer the summons of the servant to supper.

That evening the moon was near its full, and its light was almost like the light of day, softened and subdued.

Edgar Eppendorf walked out into the court; and finding the postern open, he wandered off into the park beyond the castle wall. He stopped beneath the lindens awhile, and at length started on his return.

He had not proceeded far when he saw two females approaching him, one of whom he quickly recognized to be the Lady Octavia. The other was an elderly woman, evidently an attendant. His first impulse was to turn aside; but while he was hesitating, the lady spoke to him:

"Ah, Sir Edgar, you, too, woo this beautiful moon-light."

"Yes, lady—the moonlight, and my own thoughts."

"Then I trust your thoughts are pleasant ones; for I would not that you should find aught else at Woldenberg."

She smiled as she spoke, and Edgar approached her side, remarking, as he did so:

"Surely, lady, I should have to look beyond this domain did I seek an unpleasant subject for thought. Let me trust that your thoughts have been as pleasant as have mine."

"They have not been unpleasant, sir. When I feel a grief, I do not seek companionship. I am never very unhappy when my faithful Eudocia is with me. She was my mother's friend, and she is now a friend and a counsellor to the daughter."

Edgar kindly and politely saluted the aged servant; and then, almost before he knew it, he found himself walking slowly by Octavia's side. For awhile they conversed upon such light subjects as were suggested by the scenery about them; but at length a new direction was taken.

"You said you once met my father upon the battlefield," remarked Octavia.

"I told you this afternoon that I had met him once," replied Edgar; "but I might have told you more. I might have told you that I have met him many times. It so happened that I was in the same division with him; and we have fought side by side on many fields."

And then, when he observed the eager, anxious look of the maiden, he went on, and told many interesting incidents connected with the bloody campaign which had grown out from the question whether a French prince or a German prince should ascend the throne made vacant by the death of Charles II., King of Spain. He told many things which the baron had told before him; and he told many things that were new; but even those things which Octavia had heard before came with new interest from his lips, draped as they were in language glowing with poetic enthusiasm. And then the one sentiment, apparent above all others, which characterised his speech, was respect and love for the memory of her father. This not only touched the lady of Woldenberg to the heart, but it fixed the friendship of the aged Eudocia for ever.

Three days Edgar Eppendorf spent at the castle, and during much of that time he was in Octavia's company. She loved to hear him talk of her father; and so she soon learned to love to hear him talk of other things, for he displayed a mind richly cultivated; a heart keenly alive to every generous impulse; and an understanding of more than ordinary power.

On the morning of the fourth day he called for his horse, remarking that he was obliged to go to Aix-la-Chapelle on business; but he should return within the week.

How lonesome Octavia felt when Edgar Eppendorf was gone. What did it mean? She tried to shake off the incubus, and to be cheerful and gay; but the effort was fruitless. Something was gone that had left a void in her heart. That evening she sat in her dressing-room, and Eudocia was with her. For half an hour not a word had been spoken. At length the old servant broke the spell:

"Dear lady, I've been thinking."

"Ah," uttered Octavia, with a start; "what is it?"

"I have been thinking that Edgar Eppendorf had better not come back here."

"Eudocia!"

"At least," pursued the keen-eyed dame, "he had better stay away until these five years are up!"

That night, when Octavia Woldenberg rested her head upon her pillow, she knew why she felt so lonesome—she knew whence came that void in her heart; but she had no thought of following Eudocia's advice.

No—she could not refuse the favour which the emperor had asked; though she resolved she would be very reserved in the future.

In less than a week the youthful major returned, and Octavia forgot the resolution she had taken. The warmth and intensity of his feelings upon once more gazing into her face, and listening to the music of her voice, produced corresponding emotions on her part, and she thought no more of cold reserve.

But the time was coming when her soul was to be tried!

One afternoon, about a week after Edgar's return, he and Octavia stood alone within one of the lofty towers; and there, far beyond the reach of other ears, he told the story of his love—told it boldly and frankly—and asked the lady if she would be his wife.

She trembled like an aspen; and it was not until Edgar had drawn her head upon his bosom that she found speech.

"O, kind sir," she said, starting back, "you must not ask me that question now."

"Am I then deceived?" said Edgar, with manifest pain. "Oh! if I am, unhappy is my lot, and dark henceforth to me will be the memory of your halls of Woldenberg! Octavia, I thought your heart might answer—"

"Stop—stop," interrupted the lady, forcing back the starting tears. "Before you think so harshly of me, listen to me."

And then she went on and told the story of the solemn promise she had made to her father during his last hours of earthly life,—she told it all, word for word.

"Then," said Edgar, when she had concluded, "you will wait until the five years are gone—unless that will sooner come into your possession?"

"Yes, Edgar—I must."

"And," resumed the young soldier, in a tender, prayerful tone, "suppose, at the end of that time I should come again?"

"I should welcome you."

"But suppose I should then ask you to be my wife?"

Octavia pressed her hand upon her heart, and after a momentary struggle, she replied:

"I dare not answer, for my promise to my dying father included even the pighting of my troth."

"One word—one word," urged Edgar Eppendorf, taking her by the hand; "can you say that you do not love me?"

And Octavia, before she had time for thought, cried:

"No, no!"

Then Edgar, with a happy, radiant look overspreading his face, drew the lady's arm within his own, and led her towards the stairs.

"Come with me," he said. "We have been up here long enough."

She did not withdraw her arm, nor did she ask him whither he was going.

She saw the strange light that had so suddenly beamed upon his countenance; and her own beating heart told her how sadly she should miss that light when it was withdrawn.

He led her down from the turret—down into the great hall—through two ante-rooms, stopping, at length, at the door of the library.

"I would enter here," he said.

"This was my father's private room," replied Octavia, much puzzled.

"I know it, lady; and for that reason I would enter. You can procure the key?"

"Yes."

"Then do so. Please me in this, and you shall find that I seek not the boon without just cause."

Octavia went away, and soon returned with the key, which she applied to the lock with her own hand. When the door had been opened, Edgar again took her arm and led her in. It was a large, vaulted

room, with high cases of books upon one side, while upon the opposite wall hung all sorts of arms, offensive and defensive, besides many trophies of the chase and of the battle-field. At the end of the room, opposite to the entrance, stood a great oaken cabinet, quaintly carved, with heavy doors and many drawers.

"Octavia," said Edgar, as he approached the cabinet, "somewhere within the mystic recesses of this depository, there is a treasure for both you and me. Be not alarmed because I thus invade the sacred place. I believe I have the right."

Thus speaking, he opened the great doors—for the key was in the lock—and exposed to view smaller doors, and smaller drawers, and numerous racks and pigeon-holes. Six of these drawers he took out and laid upon the floor, and then, having removed a small pin which was hidden behind a drooping piece of carving, he slid out the frame-work which had supported the drawers, thus leaving an open space nearly two feet square. The common beholder would have supposed that the extreme back of the cabinet had now been reached; and so supposed Octavia, who had been regarding all this with wondering eyes; but not so. Edgar now opened a door by the side of the place whence he had taken the drawers, and in the extreme part he found a tiny spring, upon pressing which a door flew open, revealing a shallow closet beyond what Octavia had supposed to be the extreme back of the case. Within the secret cavity thus adroitly exposed were several folds of parchment, which Edgar took out, and having looked them over he selected two—one large one, and one quite small. The larger document he handed first to the lady, saying, as he did so:

"Octavia, here is the treasure. Look at it, and tell me if you know what it is."

She reached forth her trembling hand and took the parchment; and when she had opened it, and beheld its broad seal, and its signatures, and read the first few words of address, she knew that she held her father's will. She turned pale, and quivered from head to foot; and as she gazed up into her companion's face, seemingly afraid to speak, and yet eager to question. He handed to her the smaller parchment.

"Here," he said, "is all the explanation you will need; and I think it comes from one who can speak with authority."

The moment Octavia's glance fell upon the open sheet she recognized the handwriting of her father. She took it, and read as follows:

"TO THE LADY OCTAVIA WOLDENBERG.—My blessed child.—Read carefully what I here shall write: for my hand is weak, and I cannot write much. If you ever see this, you will receive it from the hands of Major Edgar Eppendorf. He was my aid and companion through all the battles of our last campaign; always brave; always faithful; always true; and always prompt in the discharge of his duty. On more than one occasion has he saved my life; and much of the success of my division in our hard-fought battles was due to his untiring energy and devotion. I loved him as I would have loved an own son, and my most earnest desire was, that he should become the husband of my beloved daughter. But, before a proper marriage there must be a deep, abiding love. How could this be? He could not leave the army until the war should close. Ere then, my child might bestow her love elsewhere. At length I conceived a plan which I thought would bring the desired result. I called Edgar to my bedside, after I was wounded, and told him of my sweet child at home; and I asked him if he would visit you when the campaign was over. I told him where I should conceal my will, and gave him such minute directions for finding the secret depository that I knew he could not fail in the search. Then I bade him, if he should love my daughter, and she should love him—if the love should be true and abiding—that he should seek the will, and also a letter which I should leave with it, and give them both into your hands. If he could not love you; or if you could not love him, then he was to depart, and leave the hidden will for my attorney to produce at the expiration of a term which I should name; for I would not force upon my child a husband not of her own choice. But I believe that all will end as I desire. You were made for each other; and I know, if you truly love, you will be happy together."

"And now, be you as strangers; be you as friends, or be you as husband and wife, that God may bless you, and that all good angels, may guide and protect you both, is the prayer of your loving father,"

"ROBERT WOLDENBERG."

After Octavia had read the missive, she looked up and met the earnest gaze of him who had placed it in her hands. There was a warm loveliness in his moistening eye, and a prayerful look overspread his face.

"Octavia," he said, with trembling lip, "shall I remain at Woldenberg yet awhile longer?"

"For ever!" spoke the maiden; and while yet the

trembled upon her lips, she placed her hands upon his shoulders, and suffered him to clasp her to the bosom.

Together they walked out from the library—no longer separated by the old pledge; but, by a new pledge, bound soul to soul, heart to heart, to love and cherish while life should last. Down into the park, beneath the great lindens, they wandered; and there they talked of the baron, cherishing his memory as a blessed thing, and breathing prayers to God that they might never forget the gratitude that should accompany their thoughts of the noble departed.

On the following day, the old attorney was sent for; and when he had heard the story, he knew that all was right.

The will was duly proved, and its provisions faithfully executed; and, in the end, Edgar Eppendorf found himself the possessor of a munificent sum—a gift of friendship from his old commander; while Octavia found herself mistress of Woldenberg.

But she held not the possession long. The emperor sent a big parchment and a golden cross to Major Eppendorf, and ere many weeks there was a new Baron of Woldenberg.

Not now beneath the lindens, but out among the children of toil, walked Edgar and Octavia, giving from their abundance, both of love and of wealth, wherever it was needed, and followed in their bright pathway by the prayers and blessings of grateful hearts.

T. C. J.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CXX.

Fissions are likened best to floods and streams:

The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb:

So, when affection yields discourse, it seems

The bottom is but shallow whence they come.

Sir Walter Raleigh.

It had never been any part of Ned Cantor's original intentions to encumber himself, as our readers are aware, with Bell Hazelton: circumstances had forced her upon him, and he had endured rather than felt a pleasure in her presence. As for Margaret, he had long ceased to feel regret at what he termed her wayward disposition. All the affection—if the feeling be worthy of the name—which he once bore her was now centred in her son: the boy was his pride—his idol; he could train him, he fancied, after his own ideas. What those ideas were may be well imagined from the past life of the convict: had he dared, he would have separated the child from his mother—he feared her influence on his young mind; but the outrage would have been her death; and, vile as he was, he hesitated at adding her murder to the list of his crimes.

Had she been moved by natural means, he would have felt, if not joy, at least indifference.

Although rich, he had not been able to resist the influence of his official position for the acquirement of further wealth; and, shortly after his arrival in the country, had formed a disgraceful connection with the half-caste, Mitiltzy, mentioned in our last chapter, who was deeply engaged in the slave-trade.

As vice-consul, he supplied the vessels engaged in the infamous traffic with false papers; and, by the information which he gave respecting the absence or presence of British cruisers in the gulf, enabled the captains to run their cargoes with comparative impunity—a circumstance which explains how the Black Eagle had so frequently escaped the ships sent by the admiral upon the station in search of her.

On one of his visits to the house of his confederate, the half-caste became desperately enamoured of Bell, who repulsed his advances with horror: not that there was anything revolting in his appearance—on the contrary, he was endowed with that animal style of beauty peculiar to his race; it was his character which appalled her. For once, Ned had yielded to her and his daughter's prayers, and informed his visitor, at the risk of offending him, that he must pursue his suit no longer.

Now his mind had changed; the affair of the letter and the mysterious visitor had alarmed him; and he determined to get rid of her by the shortest means in his power.

As they rode along, the heartless ruffian secretly chuckled at the revenge he was about to enjoy. In fact, he considered it a refined stroke of policy—since he would not only disembarass himself of a check upon his tyranny to his daughter, but become reconciled to a man who might be useful to him.

"Let me once get her to the prochida," he thought, "and she and Mit will settle the matter as they best can between them. He is not the fellow I take him for, if he hesitates to render her as anxious for the

marriage as she is now opposed to it—once his wife, he must answer for the rest."

With this fiend-like reflection, he dismissed the subject from his mind, which next reverted to his domestic, Quacco; for he had formed a plan—and not an unprofitable one—of disposing of him. He had noted the fellow's revengeful look, after he gave him the blow; and, having lived quite long enough in the country to know that a mulatto, once offended, is never again to be trusted, resolved, despite his past fidelity, to rid himself of Bell and him together.

For several hours the party rode in silence, till the vehicle came in sight of a locanda, which stood in a small prairie, at a distance from the high road. At a signal from his master, Quacco, who was driving, pulled up his mules.

"Massa, um please to get out?" inquired Quacco. "No," replied Ned, in a surly tone; "but I am not quite sure of the distance to the prochida: go and inquire of the half-bred hound who keeps it how far it is to Senhor Mitiltzy's."

At the dreaded name, poor Bell could scarcely suppress a scream—her worst fears were confirmed.

"Yes, massa—um run 'rectly, and ask der Indian feller."

"Here he comes," interrupted his master, who did not care to trust him too far from his sight: "remain where you are."

"Yes, massa," said Quacco, submissively, anxious, if possible to efface the impression which he was cunning enough to perceive his conduct on the previous night had made.

"Mount the box!"

The order was to all appearance cheerfully obeyed—for the speaker was toying all the while with a long-barrelled Spanish pistol, which the mulatto had frequently seen him fire with, and never without hitting his mark—yet it is certain that the poor wretch had a vague foreboding of the fate which awaited him; and had he known, before starting, the place of destination, in all probability would have refused to accompany him.

By this time the landlord of the locanda was by the side of the carriage, cap in hand—for he recognized its occupant.

"How far to the prochida?" demanded Ned.

"Eight leagues, illustrious senhor," replied the man.

"The road is a rough one—and—"

"To the right or left of the mountain?" added the questioner, unceremoniously interrupting him.

"To the left," answered the half-caste, humbly; "the day, excellenza, promises to be sultry—would you condescend to alight and—"

"No!"

"I have the best wine in the province."

"Curse your wine!" exclaimed Ned, in a surly tone. "Drive on!"

Quacco gave his mules the rein, and the vehicle once more started, without its master condescending to utter even a word of thanks for the information he had obtained. Muttering curses at every step he took, the landlord of the locanda slowly returned to his house.

It was the very one where Frank Hazelton and Willie had taken shelter after their wanderings in the wood.

"Unprofitable customers!" observed the former, noticing the flashing eyes and bent brows of his host.

"Inglesi," replied the man, with a shrug.

"Englishmen!" repeated his guest, in a tone of surprise; "I thought there were few of my countrymen in this locality?"

"Too many by one, at least!" answered the disappointed innkeeper.

"He who has just passed?"

"The vice-consul."

Frank bounded from his seat, electrified with surprise at hearing that his enemy had been so near him.

"Was he alone?" he demanded, eagerly.

"Two women and a child were with him in the carriage," said the man, eyeing him suspiciously. "Poor things!" he added; "they seemed sad enough! But you appear interested, senhor?" he continued.

"Deeply—deeply!" exclaimed the young farmer, in a despairing tone—for he felt convinced that Ned had taken the alarm, and in all probability was removing his victims from his reach. "Had I but known it—oh, had I but known it!" he repeated bitterly.

"He is your enemy, then?" observed the host of the locanda; "nay, do not deny it—I can read it in your eyes; they are more truthful than the tongue—for they seldom lie. What would you give to know the place of his destination?"

"All I am worth in the world!" answered the young man, in a desponding tone.

"And how much may that be?"

Frank thrust his hand into his pocket, and drew forth his purse: it contained ten ounces in gold, and several pieces of silver. The eyes of the half-caste sparkled as he beheld it—it was long since his hand had grasped so large a sum.

"A bargain, senhor!" he exclaimed; "I will tell you!"

His guest hesitated—not from any regret at parting from his gold, but an idea had just struck him.

"It shall be yours," he said; "but on two conditions. Nay, more—the sum shall be doubled, if you comply with them!"

"Name them!"

"First, that you guide my companion to the beach, where our ship is now at anchor. I will guarantee that the captain, on the delivery of a letter which I will write, shall pay you down ten ounces more!"

"Agreed!" said the host.

"The next is," continued Frank, "that you provide me with a dress similar to those worn by your countrymen!"

The bargain was quickly struck, and minute directions given by the fellow—who found that it would be to his interest to act honestly—by which it was impossible for his guest to miss his way to the prochida. He even had the consideration to add a few words of caution respecting the character of its lawless occupant—Senhor Mitiltzy.

"Avoid him," he said, "as you would the panther in the wood, for it is not half so bloodthirsty and relentless! He has all the strength of the tiger and the cunning of the serpent!"

"And what is this man, or rather fend?" demanded the young man, struck, but not alarmed, at the description.

"Did I not tell you," replied the host, "that he resides at the prochida?"

Frank had passed sufficient time on board the slave to become, at least, partially acquainted with the slang used in that notorious traffic: he recollected that it was the name given to the remote depôts where the unhappy negroes were secretly confined, in those lands where the trade was forbidden, until an opportunity occurred of marching them without detection to the sea. He knew that many such dens existed by connivance of the authorities: the thought of Margaret and his sister witnessing the horrors of such a place distracted him. Had he known all the perils to which the objects of his love were destined to be exposed, he would have gone mad indeed.

The letter was written, and the young farmer dressed in the holiday costume of the half-caste—consisting of loose jacket, trousers, and scarf, the latter worn over the shoulders, and a huge sombrero, which not only shielded the wearer from the burning rays of the sun, but, when drawn over the brows, effectually served to disguise his features.

"Madre de Dios!" exclaimed the landlord, as he gazed upon his metamorphosed guest; "the mother who bore you would scarcely recognize you!"

"Have you no arms?"

The man hesitated for a moment, then answered that he certainly had arms—but no considerations would induce him to part with them; urging as a reason that he had many enemies in Belize; and, granting it otherwise, none but a madman or an Inglesi would travel in that country without them.

"Take mine," said Willie, drawing forth his pistols, and placing them in the hands of his companion; "I shan't require them—you may! I have three ounces of gold," he added, drawing the coins from his belt and throwing them on the table; "they will be safer with you!"

Frank fancied that the landlord looked as if he felt disappointed.

"Have an eye upon him!" he said, speaking to the boy in English; "and yet the reward I have promised him ought to keep him honest!"

"My empty pockets will," replied the faithful fellow, with a laugh, "better, I suspect, than my pistols would have done! I do not fear him," he added; "I am no chicken: if he has a quick eye, mine is not a slow one. Besides, I have kept my knife!"

After repeating his instructions to Willie for Captain Vernon—whose humanity, to say nothing of his duty, he felt assured would prompt him to take active measures for the release of Lady Sinclair and his sister—Frank Hazelton and his attached follower departed on their separate ways. It was not without a pang that the young farmer saw his companion follow the footsteps of his guide into the wood, and more than once he was on the point of recalling him, when the thought of Bell and Margaret at the prochida restrained him. It was the first time during their many wanderings that he and Willie had been separated—at least, for any length of time. No wonder that he felt it.

The sun was already beginning to cast lengthened shadows upon the earth when the calèche drove up in front of the residence of Senhor Mitiltzy, which was situated in the depths of one of those primeval forests, portions of which still extend over the vast plains of Mexico, and the adjoining countries.

The prochida was a long, low, stone building, surrounded on either side by rows of log-houses, for the purpose of confining the slaves. At the back was

an extensive swamp, which the rainy season generally converted into a lake: a lofty palisade enclosed the place, giving it the appearance of a fortress, rather than a private residence; in fact, the place might very easily have been defended against an irregular force.

The only entrance was by a strong gate, which at night was regularly closed. As the vehicle drove into the species of courtyard thus formed, the deep baying of the numerous bloodhounds, chained in their kennels, informed the inmates that strangers had arrived. Several mulattoes and Mexican servants advanced to take the mules, while others ran to inform their master, who speedily made his appearance.

Senhor Mitiltry was a tall, active-looking man, about five-and-thirty years of age. His dress, which was ornamented with a profusion of gold buttons and lace, fitted tightly to his limbs, displaying at once their symmetry and muscle. Instead of a hat, he wore his hair gathered in a silk net of various hues, which fell not inelegantly over his left shoulder; in his features were the mingled traits of his Spanish father's and Indian mother's race; his eyes in repose expressed merely haughtiness or cunning; but when excited by anger, they flashed like the eagle's on perceiving its prey.

"Senhor Inglest," he said, advancing towards Ned, who had already descended from the carriage, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure!"

"Not the less," replied the consul, grasping his jewelled hand, "that I have not taken the journey alone!"

"What mean you?"

His visitor glanced at the carriage.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

It has been suggested for our approval that the wide-awake hat and the Britannia helmet might be united, so as to retain the beautiful form of each, and yet blend them both together, the whole being a pretty style of thing for the park lounge when lounging time comes again.

A MODEST ONE.—A little girl, after returning from church where she saw a collection taken up for the first time, related what took place; and among other things, she said, with all her childish innocence, "that a man passed around a plate that had some money in it, but I didn't take any."

THE JOKE AGAINST ALEXANDRE DUMAS, or the fact, as it may please those who hear it to take it, is that he is off to America, as President Lincoln has offered him voluminous records of the war, from which he may concoct romances and dramas without end. The "Farce of the American War, by President Lincoln and Alexandre Dumas," would look well on the bills of the theatres.

NO CABBAGE.—A correspondent writes:—"I heard a story this morning about a Dutchman who lives near by, that pleased our folks some; and as fun is cheap, you can have it. Some cows broke into the Dutchman's garden one night, and destroyed his cabbages. The next morning, as he was viewing the devastation, a neighbour heard him bewail his loss thus:—"Well, what's to be done now? A Dutchman in the fall, and no cabbage."

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE.—Johnny, a youngster of some eleven years, was one day discussing probabilities with his little brother, a six-year-old. "When I am grown up," said Johnny, "I shall be married, and my children will call you Uncle Seneca. And you'll say, 'Come here, my dear, and see what Uncle Seneca's got for you.'" "Humph!" ejaculated the little one, "I guess I shall have all I can do to take care of my own young ones!"

A KNOWING PARROT.—I will not quote at full length Simon's famous story of the parrot-talking-match, where the last bird that was brought into the room, seeing so many cages of parrots, gravely exclaimed: "My G—! what a lot of parrots," and thereby won the prize; but will recount an instance of parrot humour that happened to myself at Falmouth many years since. I was walking up the hill one day, when I heard some one call out behind me, "Ho!" Thinking it was intended for me, I looked round, but seeing no one behind me, I continued my walk, when "ho!" was repeated louder than before; again I stopped and looked round, not a soul was in sight; and again I continued. "Ho!" Thinking some one was poking fun at me from some secure hiding place hard by, I did not look round this time, when "ho! ho! ho!" was repeated in the most urgent tones. Again I came to a full stop, and looked round, completely puzzled; for I could not make out where the rascal was who was thus fooling me; when an uproarious shout of laughter, a downright

peal of intense enjoyment, ensued, and my gaze following the sound, I detected Master Poll hung up in, and half-hidden by a large steady vine. Seeing he was detected, the rogue cocked his head on one side, and looking at me with a most cunning expression, said: "Sold again! Only Polly! Sold! sold! sold! Ha! ha! ha!" and quite disgusted with being chafed this way, I walked on, followed by shouts of laughter and choice selections of nautical phrases. I have no doubt whatever that, although the bird had been unquestionably taught this little amusement, and often practised it, that he had sufficient sense to connect cause and effect, and to enjoy the embarrassment he created.

CONSIDER THE RISK.

Sam is our steward; and not content with being the prince of stewards, he occasionally does a stroke of business in the money-lending way among the men. The other day one of the men on the sick-list borrowed some money of Sam, which coming to the ear of the officers, some of them took him to task about it.

"Sam," said the skipper, "how much interest do you charge?"

"Not much, sir," said Sam.

"Well, how much?—20 per cent.?"

"Oh, dear, no, sir!"

"Fifteen?"

"No, indeed, sir!"

"Ten?"

"No, no."

"Well, five, then?"

"Good gracious, sir!" exclaimed Sam, in holy horror, "do you take me for a Skylark?" (Shylock, he probably meant.)

"Well, then, how much do you charge?" asked the skipper.

"Well, sir, I tell you; I let him have five pounds for three days, and I only charge him two pounds ten to interest."

"Sam, you scoundrel!" exclaimed the skipper, "you are a Shylock."

"But think of the risk, sir," said Sam, in extenuation; "think of the risk. Why, the man was in the doctor's hands."

The laugh that followed at the expense of our worthy surgeon may be imagined, not described.

REBELLIONS OF '15 AND '45.—There is a capital story told here of a worthy clergyman somewhere on the Borders, who was not considered a "great gun" in the preaching line, and who had five sons, all clergymen. He was dining at an inn, with all his five sons, and said, in the pride of his heart, to the landlady, who was well known for her sallies, "Here sit I, Mr. —, a placed minister of the kirk, and here sit my five sons, all placed ministers of the kirk." "That brings me in mind of the '15," replied the landlady, "when I had a Highland piper and his five sons, all pipers, quartered on me, and de'il a one of them could play a spring among them!"

MAGISTERIAL JOKES.—At the late Michaelmas sessions for the county of Devon, Mr. Gordon called attention to the curious method in which the accounts were sent out from the county lunatic asylum. In one case of a pauper sent from the Honiton union, the sum was continued to be charged after he had been removed; and in the case of Sarah Jane Richards, she was charged for after she had been dead; and the guardians had paid the burial fees (laughter). Not only so, but the medical returns asserted her to be in good health (laughter). One gentleman of his acquaintance explained it in this way—that in these days, when it was customary to utilize everything, a lunatic had been put to keep the accounts.

A MAGISTRATE in Ireland, not long ago, fined a man £20 for having an illicit still at work for manufacturing whiskey. Pat, to the surprise of the court, paid the fine at the next petty sessions day. Some time afterwards, the worthy magistrate met Pat in the road, and stopped him, saying, "Now tell me Pat, how did you manage to pay the fine so quickly?" "Oh! your honour, if you won't inform, I'll tell you." "Indeed, Pat, you may trust me; out with it." "Well, your honour, as your honour will know, I'll tell you. Why, sure, after I left you in court, that day, I started another, and that's the whole truth, your honour."

A LUDICROUS incident has occurred in Belfast. A gentleman of considerable academic attainments and position undertook an extensive Continental tour this summer, and found himself in the course of it in a Siberian town among the Ural Mountains, where he became the guest of a Russian trader. The host exhibited to the admiration of his visitor a boulder of niphrite—a stone very extensively used for ornamental purposes—weighing 400 lb. avoirdupois. In the course of the conversation the traveller expressed an opinion that it was worth at least 6,000 roubles, or between 800l. and 900l. sterling. The trader seems,

from what followed, to have mistaken for a tid what was merely a valuation, and last week forwarded the boulder of niphrite to Belfast, with a little bill for 700l.!

PUTTING THE CASE FAIRLY.

Diner Out (furious): "Do you know how long you've been coming, sir? Three-quarters of an hour, and under two miles; such a wretch of a horse, only fit for the—"

Caddy: "Public can't expect us to provide Derby Winners at sixpence a mile; can they, sir?"—Punch.

"OH, THAT THIS TOO, TOO SOLID FLESH WOULD MELT.—There has been a good deal of speculation as to the origin of the Parisian street cry, 'Où est Lambert?' It is a native of this side the Channel, and grew out of the Banting moment—the allusion being to the late Daniel Lambert, of obese notoriety.—Punch.

VULGAR ERRORS.

It is a vulgar error, a very vulgar error, to omit or introduce improperly the letter H in conversation. It is a vulgar error to suppose—

That a barrister will be, as the notice on his door states, "Back in ten minutes."

That, when anyone gives you a general invitation, to "come whenever you like, we shall always be glad to see you," he means what he says, unreservedly.

That more attention can be paid to a sermon when the eyes are shut.

That actors off the stage are totally different to what they are "on."

It is a vulgar error for a low comedy man to think that he is kept out of his proper sphere of action by the leading tragedian in the same theatre.

It is a vulgar error to suppose—

That comic singing is conducive to merriment.

It is a common error for ladies—

To suppose that they really need everything they buy.

That they are purchasing a bargain at a smiling-off shop.

To suppose that their husbands tell them everything (and vice versa.)

It is a common error to suppose—

That Christmas is the only day that comes once a year.

That a performance of any sort for a charity is only beneficial to that charity.

That the position of an editor is the happiest, cheeriest, and most pleasant in the world.

That everything announced by a manager as a "tremendous hit" is even a moderate success.—Punch.

BODY AND SPIRIT.—We seem to think that we have had almost enough of Mr. Banting, and of the Davenport, and we may now remit all four (Mr. Banting may surely count as two) to the inevitable pun-mimes. Perhaps they might continue to be interesting if they would combine their attractions. If Mr. Banting would go into the cupboard and come out two Bantings, of Davenport size, while the two Davenports should also enter and come out one Davenport, of Banting size, we should say that the spirits were clever. The feat ought not to be impossible, for the showman of the brothers deliberately told us that he had seen the brothers "duplicated." We do not think that he meant that he had seen them coming away from their uncle, bearing the document which that relative is accustomed to grant, or that our informant intended to imply that a "brick in his hat" had caused him to see double, in which case there must have been four brothers present to his vision. We throw out the suggestion, for we are weary of hearing the names of the parties—and so is our friend, the public.—Punch.

ON THE KEY VIVE.—The Prince Imperial has taken his first music lesson. The poor child ought to begin to learn early, considering the great part he is expected to play.—Fun.

IS HE, INDEED?—We see it stated in a contemporary that "Mr. Roebuck is now quite recovered." Really! We did not know he had been misled, and have never seen a reward offered for his recovery. Of course, he was described as being of no use to anyone but his owner, whoever that lucky individual may be.—Fun.

THEIR TRUE COLOURS.—By an Imperial order, the Turkish commercial flag has been altered. Instead of the red ground and white crescent, as hitherto, the colours are a green ground, with a red ball in the middle, bearing a white crescent. This introduction of green into the commercial flag is peculiarly happy, that being the colour of the Profit.—Fun.

A MALTHEATED MERMAID.—It is reported that the Spanish fort of Tarifa has fired at an English merchant vessel, the Mermaid, and sunk it. We hope that, as Spain is a little country and we can bully her, Earl Russell will send out some of his myrmidons at once to avenge this insult. The good people of Tarifa

must be very stupid, or they would not have committed an action so certain to get them into trouble. But no matter how thick their Spanish nuts are, we can, perhaps, knock knowledge into them after shell-line them. For this purpose a couple of our largest hollow shot, with bursting charges in proportion, would be the best pair of crackers.—*Fun*.

A BAD JUDGE OF WHAT WAS GOOD FOR HIM.—Mr. Justice Williams having injudiciously embraced Bentham—we mean the system, not the individual, whom, we believe, it is still impossible to get round—has been brought to death's door by his rashness. We are very glad to hear that he is now much improved, and (as he has dropped the system) in a fair way of coming round.—*Fun*.

IMPRESSIONS ON THE MIND OF THE HONOURABLE AUGUSTUS FITZ-DAWLE.

That he is a useful member of society.
That a slight squint is becoming.
That the colour of his hair is auburn.
That every girl is in love with him.
That every person knows him as he walks along the streets.
That there are two l'fs in "until."
That chronic and future are synonymous terms.
That it is doubtful whether "canary" begins with a c or a k.
That Fernando Pe is in Iceland.
That 5 p.m. is "morning."
That actors and authors are very jolly companions—after twelve o'clock at night.
That to earn one's living is vulgar.
That renewing "a bill" is equivalent to paying it.
That there is only one man in London who can make a coat.
That he can recollect one September when there were only two families in town.
That Margate is a Thames-side village, adjoining Wapping.

ISLE OF BEAUTY, FARE THEE WELL.—"The Channel Islands," says a writer in the Zoologist for last month, "are gradually sinking into the sea. Here's a look out for the inhabitants of the Islands; they will no doubt be in a state of terrible alarm. Perhaps it may allay their fears to learn that the name of the writer in question is Walker."—*Fun*.

CUMMING IT TOO STRONG.—Serious popular disturbances have broken out recently at Smyrna owing to the prophecy of some dervish that the world was coming to an end. Certain classes of the community thought they might as well make the most of their time, and set to work pillaging. This should put Dr. Cumming on his guard. If his prophecies of the millennium were acted on by the million, he would find his prediction of the end of the world not exactly the end he aims at.—*Fun*.

SCIENCE.

THE BIRKENHEAD CHAIN CABLE AND ANCHOR PROVING HOUSE.—We have lately taken occasion to enlarge upon the necessity of accurate testing machines; and the following statement, showing the amount of work done at the Chain and Anchor Testing Works, Birkenhead, from 1st April to 28th September, 1864, and the work done during the same period of 1863, may be interesting to many:—In 1864, 365 anchors, 21,063 fathoms of chain cable, 84 iron and steel plates, 221 double-edge bolts, 34 shackles, and 5 pieces of wire rope were tested at this establishment. During 1863, 103 anchors, 11,990 fathoms of chain, 3 steel plates, 30 wire ropes, and 7 pieces of chain underwent the same operation.

ABOUT IRON AND THE BLOOD.

PHYSIOLOGISTS tell us that the most important component of the blood, that grand element of the animal system, consists of certain particles called "red globules," and that these globules owe their colour and some of their important properties to the presence of iron. The chief office of the iron is said to be to absorb oxygen from the air in the lungs, and to convey it, by means of the circulation, through the whole system, where it is detached from its vehicle of conveyance, and made to assist in the various physiological processes for which oxygen is vitally necessary.

Hence the difference in colour between arterial and venous blood. In the former, the iron is highly oxidized, having a bright red colour; in the latter, it has parted with oxygen, and has lost its brilliancy, till this is renewed by further exposure to atmospheric air. It is clear, therefore, that the presence of a certain quantity of iron in the blood is absolutely necessary to the healthy action of the system, and that, if the quantity falls short, disorder of some kind must ensue. And that this often does take place is well known; for diseases exist, whose name is legion, directly traceable to some form of what is called *anæmia*

or an impoverished state of the blood, consisting chiefly of a diminution of the proportion of the red globules, and of the quantity of iron they contain.

In 1,000 parts of healthy blood, the average normal proportion of red globules is said to be about 127, and of metallic iron about 0.51; these have been found reduced in cases of *anæmia* by about one-third, or even more. Our fair readers must not suppose, by the use of this hard Greek word, that the matter does not concern them; on the contrary, they are usually the greatest sufferers from the class of diseases we have mentioned. There are few females in town life who do not know, by sad personal experience, some of the almost infinite varieties of ailment synonymous with, or arising out of, what is popularly called "debility," or "want of tone in the system;" and in a very large number of these cases the fundamental cause of all the mischief is the want of a few grains more of that health-giving metal, a thousand times more precious than gold.

Nor are women the only sufferers. The fast life, both bodily and mental, of the present age has brought the more robust sex also considerably under the anæmic category. It is not improbable that a direct relation may exist between the state of the corporeal fluid and that of the mental and nervous energy; and, if this is so, the production of a poem, or the solution of a hard mathematical problem, may have a material effect upon the red globules, and we may say that, whenever a great engineer, like Stephenson or Brunel, racks his brain to design a Britannia Bridge, or a Great Eastern, for every ton of iron he puts into the structure, he abstracts a fraction of a grain of the same material from the lifeblood flowing in his veins. —*Macmillan's Magazine*.

LOVELY, SPOTLESS LITTLE FLOWER.

Lovely, spotless little flower,
Sparkling in the bridal bower,
Never, never yet before
On Time's dark and stormy shore
Did thy joyous parents see
Such a light as shines in thee!

How we dote upon the shrine
With a jewel so divine!
How we pray that never storm
Falls on such a beauteous form!
How we ask that noblest worth
Crown thee from thy happy birth!

Lovely, spotless little flower,
Sparkling in the bridal bower,
May thy mother's kindly grace
Paradise thy guileless face!
May the manhood of thy sire
Permeate with noble fire!

Such our prayers!—An angel's wing
Is around thee murmuring,
And its music scatters joy
On thy sweet brow, gallant boy,
Whispers, "Heaven will guard this flower
Of the sacred bridal bower!"

W. R. W.

GEMS.

WHEN we record our angry feelings, let it be on the snow, that the first beam of sunshine may obliterate them for ever.

THERE are people who are disagreeable with great merit; and others who, with great faults, are agreeable.

TOIL, feel, think, hope. A man is sure to dream enough before he dies, without making arrangements for the purpose.

THE great friend of truth is time; her greatest enemy is prejudice; and her constant companion is humility.

DAY begins in darkness, grows bright, strong, and glorious, and in darkness closes; and so man begins life in weak childhood, attains to the meridian of manhood, and second childhood ends his day career.

PLEASURE in general is the apprehension of a suitable object, suitably applied to a rightly disposed faculty, and so must be conversant both about the faculties of the body and of the soul respectively.

ONE of the greatest evils of this world is, men praise rather than practise virtue. The praise of honest industry is on every tongue, but it is very rare that the worker is respected more than the drone.

WE pity the man who has nothing to do; for idleness is the mother of more misery and crime than all other causes ever thought or dreamed of by the profoundest thinker or the wisest theorist.

NOTHING can excuse a want of charity to a fellow-creature in distress. He may perhaps be poor through

his own folly or that of his ancestors, and we are perhaps, rich through our own roguery or that of our ancestors.

SHOULD we be disquieted at anything, we should consider with ourselves, is the thing of that worth, that for it we should so disturb ourselves, and lose our peace and tranquillity.

STATISTICS.

THE FREED SLAVES.—The following is a carefully prepared estimate of the number of slaves thus far set free by the administration or by the events of the war, viz.:—In Utah and Nebraska, 44; in Delaware, 592; in the district of Columbia, 3,185; in Indian territory, 7,360; in Texas, 30,427; in North Carolina, 55,176; in South Carolina, 67,066; in Arkansas, 74,074; in Kentucky, 75,163; in Maryland, 87,188; in Missouri, 114,965; in Alabama, 145,028; in Georgia, 154,066; in Mississippi, 155,540; in Virginia, 163,629; in Tennessee, 183,912; in Louisiana, 201,153; total, 1,868,600.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RESTORATION OF VIOLET COLOUR.—The following is a description of a process for restoring the colour to violet silk, after its extraction by acid:—First, brush with tincture of iodine the portion of fabric affected; after a few seconds, well saturate the spot with a solution of hyposulphite of soda, and dry gradually in the air; the colour will then be perfectly restored.

PATTERN WOOD AND IRON VARNISH.—1 lb. of gum asphaltum, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of gum benzoin; put both in a can or jug with 1 gallon of benzole, and let stand until they dissolve; then add 1 pint of linseed oil, and it is ready for use. To have it clear, leave out the asphaltum; and for patterns, leave out the oil; and to change the colour, add any colour you wish, and mix with the clear varnish.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE King of Italy is sorely perplexed to know where to spend the New Year's Day, whether in the capital of last year, or the one that the convention points out to him. It is quite a case of two stools.

THE cost of the Danish war seems to have been heavily felt by the ill-filled Austrian treasury, as we hear from Vienna that the contraction of a new loan of £2,500,000 in a 5 per cent. stock, at the price of 85, is announced. It is a bad time to come on the money market with any such proposal.

THE King of the Sandwich Islands is said to have sent an Ambassador to Paris, to say that he would gladly accept the protectorate of France, giving a large territory in payment for the support. What is the Majesty of Sandwich afraid of? Surely not the Federals, whose mild and beneficent sway it would be a pleasure for him to be under.

SOME few days since, a suit was terminated in Hungary, which has engaged the courts in that country for 180 years. The dispute was between the families Wasyady and Broukay, each of whom claimed an immense estate. The result of this long litigation is that the latter family remain in possession of the domain.

SAY IT IN THE HOUSE.—Mr. Ferrand told his Devonport constituents the other evening that, as to retrenchment, Lord Palmerston's Cabinet had been scandalously involved in gross and corrupt jobs, and in wicked waste on fortifications, which are of no more use for the protection of the country than so many acres of blotting paper would be.

DISCOVERY AT POMPEII.—The excavations at Pompeii have just led to the discovery of a temple of Juno, on the flags of which were scattered more than 200 skeletons. They are those of women and children, who, during the eruption of Vesuvius, had hastened to the temple, to seek refuge and implore the protection of the goddess.

A SWIM OF THIRTY MILES.—During the rough weather and heavy sea that recently prevailed, a Sennen man perceived three tame swans approaching the rocks. One of them was soon knocked about among the cliffs and killed. The other two were secured. They were found to be very hungry, and their thirst was intense. Their clipped wings showed that water and not air had been the path by which they found their way to the Land's End, and within the last day or two it has been discovered that they belong to Mr. Augustus Smith, M.P., and—either tired of island life, or venturing too far from Treco during a westerly wind—swam from Sicily to the Land's End, a voyage across the Atlantic of nearly thirty miles. They have returned with less exertion, as the Little Western has taken them home.